AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM APPROACH TO OUTREACH MINISTRY

CONNECTING CONGREGATIONS WITH NON-CHURCH HOUSEHOLDS

A Practical Research Project

presented to

the faculty of

Claremont School of Theology

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Ministry

by

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This Practical Research Project, completed by

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under the direction of his faculty committee and approved by its members,

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Abstract

An Integrated System Approach to Outreach
Connecting Congregations with Non-Church Households

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This project was designed to provide a process by which a local congregation could design, articulate, and more effectively live out their mission statement through ministry efforts that connect church households using community-based household information.

Given that most Christian congregations in the United States are declining, the project provided each congregation additional household resources to address this trend. These resources included clarifying demographic, socio-economic, financial, religious, and ministry information to integrate into their missional thinking to better understand how they might connect with non-church residents.

The project is designed for clergy and lay leaders in local churches to explore new ways to offer or extend their ministries to the broader community. It can also be helpful to regional agency staff who are tasked with assisting their local churches as they seek to provide a viable and vital ministry in their community.

The project focuses on bringing theology and practical application together in the life of three local churches. The goal is to shape a ministry plan to connect with non-churched households. The methodology includes the community information resource, MissionInsite which provides a target marketing component, MOSAIC.

The three churches that participated in the research included:

- St. George's Episcopal Church in Riverside from the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles

- San Marcos United Methodist Church from the California Pacific Conference of the United Methodist Church
- Christ Lutheran Church in West Covina from the Southwest California Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
    - At Christ Lutheran Church both the historic congregation and emerging Chinese congregation were involved in the project.

Each congregation was represented by the pastor and several lay members as part of a project work team.

The project results supported the conclusion that congregations need to engage in a critical review of their current mission statement to determine whether the statement is written to reflect and serve the congregation or is focused on outreach. This review once completed can be evaluated against the learning of what is true about the congregants and how they represent all the households in the community.

Additionally, the project concluded that a skilled facilitator knowledgeable of the information system and ministry planning process enhances effective outreach. With the knowledge that 65.27% of U.S. households, reported in the 2025 MissionInsite American Beliefs Study, are not involved in a local church, there are an abundance of non-churched households.

A third conclusion is that churches need to understand how the non-church households receive communication. This means that it is essential for viable and vital local church ministry to have members with expertise in Broadcast Streaming/TV, Mobile SMS, Direct Mail, Email, Radio and Social Media.

Dedication

I dedicate this research project to my wife, Sharon Phelps, who provided ongoing encouragement and support as I pursued this degree. She is joined by my family and friends who believed in me to complete this commitment.

Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge the three churches who agreed to participate in the research. They were engaging partners with both clergy and lay participation. Their efforts over several months provided the learnings expressed in this paper. It has been a pleasure working with everyone.

I also want to acknowledge and thank ACS Technologies for the use of their MissionInsite Community Information System. This project paper includes reports from this information system that contain data licensed from the U.S. Census, Synergos Technologies Inc., Mosaic by Experian and The American Beliefs Survey. These reports are found in the Tables and Figures.

Finally, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to learn from a gifted faculty at Claremont School of Theology.

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Introduction

In 1990, I joined two individuals in California who had a vision of providing community demographics and socioeconomic marketing data to churches. They observed that churches had been in decline for the past number of decades due to new lifestyle patterns emerging in the younger generations.

Historically, a local church's future was enhanced in two basic ways. One was that individuals and families had a denominational identity. If they moved to another community, they would attend their denomination. Children also continued their loyalty and attendance as the next generation of family members.

Beginning in the 1960s and 70s, the population became more mobile. Interstates made travel more convenient, and individuals and families moved from their communities to other areas motivated by new education and employment opportunities. During this time denominational loyalty began to wane. People moved to new communities and began shopping for a church that met their needs. Many of these were the younger generation who were living in new environments. Also, with their parents removed from their daily lives, the younger generation no longer felt the same loyalty to a denomination and often became less involved in continuing their church attendance.

In the 2025 article "The Evolution of Church Attendance: A Look Through the Years" for the blog *Grow Stronger Roots,* the author states,

> During the 1950s and 1960s, nearly **70% of Americans** identified as regular churchgoers, attending services every week. . .
>
> By the **1970s and 1980s**, religious trends began to shift. While churches remained influential, societal changes started to impact attendance. More people explored different spiritual paths, and secular ideas gained traction. Although a majority still identified as religious, weekly churchgoing began to decline.

> Moving into the **2000s**, the drop in attendance became even more pronounced. Surveys showed that regular churchgoers comprised just **32% of the U.S. population**, a stark contrast to previous decades. . .
>
> Fast forward to the present day, and the landscape has evolved even further. Current estimates suggest that only about 20% of Americans attend church weekly, with nearly **57%** rarely or never attending.[1]

These shifts have had a negative effect on the ability of local church congregations attracting new members. Congregations were not equipped to embrace this change and, therefore, entered a period of steady decline. The concept of a church using community demographics and socioeconomic marketing data was new to church leaders.

Our new company, Percept's missional vision, was to provide these resources to denominational structures and their churches. As we engaged in this effort, one of my partners and I, as ordained clergy who previously served local congregations, were interested in studying the correlation of how a congregation's mission statement informed their use of these new resources in their outreach ministry efforts to non-churched households.

However, at the time, there were no educational programs offered by a seminary for "A Practical Research Project" unless you were currently serving as a pastor of a local church. Therefore, our interest in pursuing this study in an academic environment was not available.

Hence, this research project is being conducted to fulfill that interest in learning from existing congregations how this integration could support new ministry efforts.

Ministries Need

This project addresses the need for a process in local congregations that provides.

[1] Grow Stronger Roots, The Evolution of Church Attendance: A look through the years," *Grow Stronger Roots* (blog), April 28, 2025, https://growstrongerroots.com/2025/04/28/the-evolution-of-church-attendance-a-look-through-the-years.

theological grounding for ministry efforts that utilize household lifestyle information to connect with non-church households.

Response to the Need

The project focused on creating an integrated system of theological thought and practical applications that support the use of household socio-economic and religious data to connect congregations with non-church households. Given that most Christian congregations in the United States are declining, I believed that providing another approach to church growth was a worthwhile research project. Of all the books that provide various theories and practical applications I have not found any that explore an approach that integrates a theological perspective that addresses household behavioral lifestyle information as essential in reaching non-churched families and individuals.

Audience

This project is directed to clergy, and lay leaders in congregations that are exploring ways to offer or extend their ministries to the broader community. It will also be helpful to denominational staff who are tasked with assisting churches to be viable and vital in their communities.

Theological and Theoretical/Conceptual Stance

I believe that Christian congregations are a collection of people who are seeking spiritual collective experience and a deeper and more holistic relationship with God through Jesus Christ. I view the task of pastoral and lay leadership of a congregation to have a theological message that is compelling not only for members of the congregation but also for those not affiliated with the congregation. This theological message must have practical elements that

invite the non-churched to experience a place that will enrich and provide greater fulfillment to their lives.

This project focused on a process that directed the participating congregations to engage and evaluate the effectiveness of their theological and practical message to non-churched households and seek to enhance that message in the future.

Method

The project focused on bringing theology and practical application together in the life of three local congregations shaping a ministry plan to connect with non-churched households. The methodology used socioeconomic and behavioral household information provided by the MissionInsite Community Information System to understand household interests and needs. This resource system includes household information on socioeconomic and behavioral activity as well as financial and religious interests.

One church was selected from the California Pacific Conference of the United Methodist Church, the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, and the Southwest California Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in consultation with the Pastor/Priest and lay leadership of each congregation.

Following their selection, the leadership team of each congregation was personally interviewed by me in July and August and engaged in the research project during the months of August, September, October and November.

The first session with each research team focused on evaluating their mission statement and how it impacted their ministry efforts to non-churched households. We also reviewed what current activities are in place that interact with their community and if any of those are focused on non-churched households.

The next month was dedicated to an introduction to the MissionInsite Community Information System. This introduction included each church with a worshiping congregation viewing their congregants on a map. They then created a ministry area that included at least 80% of their congregants. This became the primary area of community research for this Doctor of Ministry project.

Following each congregation's learnings from their mission statement and MissionInsite information they created an outreach activity to non-churched households.

Each congregation submitted their report in November and all reports that are included in this paper.

Project Outline

Chapter One: Engaging the Conversation of Church Growth

This section reflects on some of the highlights of the church growth effort over the years. This includes how biblical interpretation has motivated efforts to reach non churched households.

Chapter Two: Discussing Theological and Theoretical Foundations

This section sets the biblical bases that not only supports the concept of growing a congregation but provides the biblical message to communicate the gospel to all people. It uses the household data to validate how efforts to connect non-churched households are enhanced in accomplishing this goal.

Chapter Three: Description of Research Methodology

This chapter describes the research methodology of this project. Here the process of recruiting the participating congregations is outlined. It includes the process that each

congregation used to analyze their current situation and then create their revised theological and practical action plan.

Chapter Four: Presenting Research Outcomes

This chapter includes and analyzes the outcomes of the initial pastoral interviews, the initial session with the pastor and leadership team, and each of the monthly reporting sessions.

Chapter Five: Conclusions & Recommendations

This chapter presents my conclusions drawn from this research and presents recommendations for further research.

Chapter One

Engaging the Conversation of Church Growth

The literature on Church Growth covers a broad scope from missionary zeal that focuses on conversion of people to the Christian faith, to activities that support people in their journey of faith development. In reviewing the following collection of positions taken on defining and implementing church growth activities we can experience how these various approaches were part of the evolving church growth story. Among these stories of growth is the understanding that the conversation must not just focus narrowly on the church but also on understandings about the meaning of God's reign as understood from the teachings of the New Testament.

Towards a Theology of Church Growth, edited by David Goodhew and published in 2015, is a collection of writings on various elements that impact church growth. Goodhew is Co-Director of The Centre for Church Growth Research (CCGR). This is an academic research center based at Cranmer Hall, the theological training college contained within Durham University's St. John's College, Durham, United Kingdom.

In the introduction of *Towards a Theology of Church Growth*, Goodhew writes, "The New Testament is about God's Kingly rule, into which church has to fit and which is not coterminous with the church. The gospel is incarnate in the small and overlooked as much as in the large and spectacular. And church growth is a wide concept. One influential definition sees growth in the Christian life as a threefold balance, entailing growth in personal holiness, growth in societal transformation and the numerical growth of church congregations." [2]

[2] David Goodhew, introduction to *Towards a Theology of Church Growth,* ed. David Goodhew (Routledge, 2016), 22, ProQuest Ebook Central.

Another dimension of the conversation points to the work of evangelism as an intentional commitment or response to a mandate to take the Good News to different places and communities with a message that is novel. Part Two of *Towards a Theology of Church Growth* is titled "Church Growth and the Bible." The first section of Part Two titled "The Kingdom of God and Church Growth in the New Testament," is written by Dr. Mark Bonnington, who is a Fellow in New Testament at St. John's College, and senior minister of King's Church, Durham, England. He states, "The most obvious way in which the early church grew is given clear prominence in the Book of Acts. Jesus commissions his disciples to be witnesses in Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth-it is surely right to take Acts 1:8 as a key programmatic statement for the whole book."[3]

Bonnington also cites Romans 15 where Paul talks about traveling to additional areas to proclaim the gospel including traveling to Spain. He continues, "it is a simple observation that the earliest churches grew because they spread to unevangelized areas and unreached peoples and when the gospel came it came with all the advantages and disadvantages of a novel faith.[4]

Another dimension of the conversation deals with the impact of the Gospel on the individual, the capacity to create community as well as to transform the wider community. Bonnington observes that, "the first churches grew because the gospel was foundational to their life and through it the life transforming power of God created its own dynamics of conversion and community."[5]

Finally, Bonnington makes the point that the New Testament not only supports the proclamation of the gospel to convert people but that, "it cannot be stressed enough that the early

[3] Mark Bonnington, "The Kingdom of God and Church Growth in the New Testament," in *Towards a Theology of Church Growth*, ed. David Goodhew (Routledge, 2016), 66, ProQuest Ebook Central.
[4] Bonnington, "The Kingdom of God," 66.
[5] Bonnington, "The Kingdom of God," 69.

Jesus movement did not just make converts, it created communities too. The focal strength of commitment to Christ and the boundary marking effect of the moral and ethical transformation expected of converts made for inclusive but transformative communities of grace."[6]

The focus on the kingdom of God in these writings is also present in other writings. This is true for Donald McGavran, recognized as the father of church growth who saw church growth essential so all persons would become found and returned to the Kingdom of God.

Gary McIntosh, President of the Church Growth Network and Professor of Christian Ministry and Leadership at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, in his book *Biblical Church Growth* published in 2003 states, "why do some churches grow, and others don't? That is the central issue explored in *Biblical Church Growth*. It is a question that was first addressed by Donald McGavran when he served as a missionary in India. During a missionary career that lasted three decades, he prayed, studied, and researched this question. When he began to share his discoveries, he found both acceptance and rejection of his ideas. Today he is considered by many to have been the premier missionary strategist of our time. Unfortunately, however, most pastors and church leaders no longer read his books or articles.

What is most central what most pastors and church leaders know of church growth comes from popular authors who sometimes derive their ideas from sources other than the Bible. McGavran, on the other hand, was a biblical missiologist. He coined the term church growth as a synonym for effective evangelism, which he believed included winning converts to Christ and helping them become responsible members of local congregations. While he used modern

[6] Bonnington, "The Kingdom of God," 72.

research to enhance his understanding, the core of his insights arose from his understanding of Gods authoritative word."[7]

McIntosh continues to say "By using the word *biblical,* I do not mean to imply that previous books written on this topic are not biblically based. I used the word *biblical,* to make the point that, contrary to popular opinion, church growth is not based on sociology, marketing, or demographics. Church growth is a biblical concept exploding from the life-giving nature of God."[8]

McIntosh points out that McGavran saw church growth as an essential missional call of God for all humans because all humans were lost and in need of being found, in need of receiving salvation. In his book *Understanding Church Growth* McGavran writes "Among other desires of God in Christ, He beyond question wills that persons be found, that is, be reconciled to Himself. Most cordially admitting that God has other purposes, we should remember that we serve a God *Who Finds Persons*. God has an overriding concern that humankind should be redeemed. However, we understand the word, biblical witness is clear that human beings are "lost." The Finding God wants them found, that is, brought into a redemptive relationship with Jesus Christ where, baptized in His Name, they become part of God's Household. Among other characteristics of mission, therefore, a chief and irreplaceable one must be this: that mission is the divine finding, vast and continuous. A chief and irreplaceable purpose of mission is church growth. Service is good, but it must never be substituted for finding."[9]

This approach to church growth as it gained momentum in the United States came under criticism from many scholars including theologian Darrell Guder who noted in his article

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[7] Gary L. McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth: How You Can Work with God to Build a Faithful Church* (Baker Books, 2003), 7.
[8] McIntosh, *Biblical Church Growth,* 7.
[9] Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Eerdmans, 1970), 32.

Evangelism and the Debate over Church Growth, that "The Church Growth Movement addresses evangelism more methodologically than theologically; it focuses largely on how we do evangelism, since the "why" of mission is assumed with the principle that God desires the numerical growth of the church."[10]

C. Peter Wagner, a leader in the church growth movement, responded to Guder's criticism by highlighting the theological and biblical foundations of the movement. In his book, *Leading Your Church to Growth* published in 1984, Wagner states, "The Church Growth Movement has boldly asserted that not only is church growth OK, but it is the will of Almighty God. From the time he founded the movement in 1955, Donald McGavran of Fuller Seminary has declared with the tireless verb of a prophet that God wants his lost sheep found and brought into the fold. Those who have chosen to identify with McGavran's movement, and I include myself among them, have chosen as their biblical rallying point Jesus' Great Commission to "go therefore and make disciples of all the nations." (Mat. 28:19)"[11]

Wagner also points out that in the early years, church growth research was centered at the Fuller School of World Mission in Pasadena, California, founded by McGavran in 1965. The school produced over 400 graduates by the early 1980's who directed their spreading the gospel efforts in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In this way, Wagner's response made the case that the theological grounding and the biblical mandates that informed the church growth movement were evident both in study and research, as well as in practical application.

The practical applications that have been effective for congregations include those of Adam Hamilton, founder and pastor of Resurrection, A United Methodist Church in Kansas City

[10] Darrell L. Guder, "Evangelism and the Debate Over Church Growth," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 48, no. 2 (1994): 147, https://doi.org/10.1177/002096430004800204.
[11] C. Peter Wagner, *Leading Your Church to Growth* (Regal Books, 1984), 13.

and Rick Warren, founder and pastor emeritus of Saddleback Church in Mission Viejo, California. They provide ministry activities that address everyday life issues that have been successful in growing their congregations. Adam Hamilton in his book *Leading Beyond the Walls* states, "Each congregation, regardless of how small or how large its membership, must strive to excel in some area."[12] Rick Warren in his books *A Purpose Driven Church* and *A Purpose Driven Life* states that life becomes fulfilled when you discover your purpose individually and as part of a purpose driven church.

The activities of these churches and others like them inform their ministry to reach non-church households in their community.

Michael Moynagh in his 2014 book, *Being Church, Doing Life: Creating Gospel Communities Where Life Happens* talks about creating "witnessing communities." These are built around three aspects. Community, Visibility and Activity. He shares an example of this activity happening at a church in England. "Saint Mary's in the East of England started a young adult's group, with meal-based meetings. It drew in people from outside the church and numbers grew to about 40. The leaders did not develop a strategy for how the group would relate to the Sunday morning congregation. They simply raised the issue of identity: what does it mean to belong to Saint Mary's? Links emerged organically. Some of the young adults contributed to the church's annual outreach event in the town. When the leader of the new group ran a "Kingdom Ministries" for the young adults, several from the morning congregation came too. Likewise, when members of the morning congregation started a Sunday evening celebration a number of

[12] Adam Hamilton, *Leading Beyond the Walls: Developing Congregations with a Heart for the Non-Churched* (Abington Press, 2002), 19.

the young adults got involved. These connections were not planned. They just happened by making sure everyone knew what the others were doing."[13]

This approach is reflective of new approaches represented by the ministries of Fresh Expressions. The Fresh Expressions web site states that "Fresh Expressions partners with churches and faithful risk-takers to unleash new forms of Christian community in the wild and wonderful spaces of everyday life."[14]

In 2004, Fresh Expressions emerged out of the Anglican and Methodist churches in England. "Pastors and leaders started to recognize new, organically-forming trends of church as an opportunity to proclaim the faith afresh to each generation…These fresh expressions grew in popularity across many denominations. Over time, Fresh Expressions has become a vehicle to mesh the existing church culture with newly-inspired ways of reaching those who don't go to church."[15]

Ministries of Fresh Expression may include some of the following:

- Dinner Church–communities that gather around a shared meal and a Jesus story
- Messy Church–intergenerational gatherings where families explore faith together
- Expresiones Divinas–fresh expressions of church among Spanish speaking communities
- Recreation Church–communities that gather around a shared hobby, interest or sport
- Café Church–communities that gather for shared life and faith exploration in local coffee shops, pubs, and restaurants
- House Church–communities that gather in local homes and neighborhoods

[13] Michael Moynagh, *Being Church, Doing Life: Creating Gospel Community Where Life Happens* (Monarch Books, 2014), 143.
[14] "Who We Are," Fresh Expressions, accessed November 14, 2025, https://www.freshexpressions.com/who-we-are.
[15] "History," Fresh Expressions, accessed November 14, 2025, https://www.freshexpressions.com/history.

- Recovery Church–communities that gather around the shared journey of recovery from addiction
- Church in the Marketplace–workplace communities and missional businesses
- Missional Communities–communities that gather around a shared passion for serving their local communities and those in the margins
- Digital Communities–more than livestreamed worship, these communities form in digital spaces such as video games, Tik Tok, and more

"In 2010, the Fresh Expressions movement took root in the US. Germination in the US was thanks largely to the support of the Baptist General Association of Virginia. The movement began working to tap into the large portion of Americans that don't currently belong to any church. The first national gathering took place in 2012, with representatives from twenty national and regional denominations. The message that is communicated is that as the movement continues to grow, the commitment is to remain a national, cross-denominational movement.[16]

One expression of Messy Church started in an Anglican church near Portsmouth, UK, in 2004 and has grown into an international movement operating across a wide range of Christian denominations and traditions. It became a part of The Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) in 2006 with publication of the first Messy Church book by founder Lucy Moore. Messy Church enables people of all ages to belong to Christ together through their local church. It is a way of being church which is particularly suited to families but welcoming to all. It meets at a time and on a day that suits local families and is particularly welcoming to people who have never belonged to a church.

[16] "History," Fresh Expressions.

Today, Messy Church has grown to over 4,000 registered Messy Churches in 30 different countries. Over 500,000 throughout the world worship monthly at Messy Church. Bible Reading Fellowship (BRF) is a Christian charity based in Oxfordshire, UK and is the home of Messy Church. but also supports resources and enables the work of Messy Church. BRF is passionate about making a difference through the Christian faith.

"The Fresh Expressions movement, born in the United Kingdom, migrated to the United States and taken on a life of its own. In the Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church alone, we have seen almost two hundred of these communities emerge in the last couple of years, most of them tethered to inherited congregations."[17]

As mentioned above, Fresh Expressions is a movement of the Holy Spirit cultivating new forms of church alongside existing congregations to reach a changing world. The focus is doing life alongside not-yet-Christians as we are formed as disciples of Jesus Christ together.

In 2019, Michael Beck, serving on the Fresh Expressions US National Team, and cultivator of Fresh Expressions in the Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church published *Deep Roots, Wild Branches: Revitalizing the Church in the Blended Ecology*. In his book, Beck states, "It's noteworthy to mention the blended ecology of Jesus' own life and ministry—synagogue and temple, coexisting together. Jesus worked in the fields, and he visited the temple. He preached sermons on the mountains, and he preached in the synagogues. He is the embodiment of both attractional and emerging: the most attractive human being that ever was and he was completely dedicated to entering the lives of people where they were.

Furthermore, Jesus is the fulfilled embodiment of temple, tabernacle, and Torah. Jesus synthesized all the models before him into one mega model: a stationary, mobile, enfleshed,

[17] Michael Adam Beck, *Deep Roots, Wild Branches: Revitalizing the Church in the Blended Ecology* (Seedbed Publishing, 2019), 53.

incarnational, attractional, emerging flesh-and-blood tabernacle, temple, synagogue—fully human, fully God.! Jesus is a blended ecology, the life of heaven and mud-stuff."[18]

I find the image of *Deep Roots, Wild Branches* an excellent image to hold as the church seeks to effectively engage the non-churched households in our society. According to the current religious survey taken earlier this year for MissionInsite, 65.27% of the United States population indicate they are non-churched households.

[18] Michael Adam Beck*, Deep Roots, Wild Branches*, 69.

Chapter Two

Theological and Theoretical/Conceptual Stance

I believe that Christian congregations are a gathering of people who are seeking a spiritual collective experience and a deeper and more holistic relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

I view the task of the pastoral and lay leadership of the congregation to have a theological message that is compelling for those not affiliated with the congregation. This theological message must have practical elements that invite the non-churched to experience a place that will enrich and provide greater fulfillment to their lives.

This project focuses on a process that invites the participating congregations to engage and evaluate the effectiveness of their theological and practical message to non-churched households and seek to enhance that message in the future.

During my time as a staff member of the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church in 1984-5, I was introduced to the use of census demographics to assist church leaders to better understand how changes in the census data could impact churches future ministry. The National Division of the board provided consultants to lead a process with United Methodist Conferences to better understand where growth patterns were taking place to support church growth and identify future strategic locations for new churches. As one of the consultants for three years (1985-1987) I saw the value of having community information available to support missional efforts.

During this time, I also served as the pastor of First United Methodist Church in Bangor, Pennsylvania. Part of my pastoral commitment was to provide leadership that supported congregants to experience a vibrant and vital faith journey that impacted the community with

compassion and justice. Community demographic information provided information that clarified basic population changes taking place in the community and assisted in making informed decisions regarding our ministry.

Earlier in my ministry I was introduced to a church renewal movement known as Faith at Work. The focus of this ministry was to support lay people to share their journey of faith with others. The early expressions of Faith at Work were published in a magazine which was primarily a collection of stories of laypersons sharing their witness of their relationship with God and how it was changing their lives. This activity was referred to as Relational Christianity. I learned that the movement emerged through the ministry of an Episcopal priest, Samuel Moor Shoemaker (1892-1963), who served as the rector of Calvary Episcopal Church in New York City from 1925 to 1952, and then Calvary Episcopal Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania from 1952 to 1962. His main emphasis of ministry focused on lay ministry, personal evangelism, and spiritual renewal.

Shoemaker concludes his book, *Extraordinary Living for Ordinary Men* with the following statement regarding witnessing to others.

> We shall then be able to witness to others by life and by word. When the "shine" and the "sparkle" are there, it will not be hard to open the conversation. It is not a matter of personality. It is a matter of grace. It will happen not only with individuals, but with the Holy Spirit will begin changing homes, businesses, communities. The sharing of an experience in which we can all participate is more than convincing, than declaring a faith in what we believe. The church is going to have to justify its presence and make its faith known in this very practical world-not by theoretical arguments coming from scholars' studies or pulpits but by facing the concrete needs in the world, and showing that it has the real solution to them by solving them. Theoretical defense of the faith may touch the few. The many will only be touched by practical demonstrations of the workableness of the faith when really tried. There are hundreds of people whose lives are patent demonstrations of these things.
>
> Am I asking the church to change completely the philosophy of his work? Yes I am. I have no doubt about faith I have the gravest doubt about what the church is doing to make the faith live in and for the world. I believe the church must push aside the

> lumbering mass of organizations with which it is now encumbered and take a fresh look at its work in the world.[19]

It is with this early influence of sharing an experience as opposed to declaring a faith in which I believe that I view the historical church growth movement. The Faith at Work approach emphasized living in a right relationship with God, with self, and with the world. During the 1960 and 1970 decades this movement was instrumental in supporting the emergence of lay witness missions. They were born from the ministry of

> Rev. Ben Johnson, a Methodist pastor in the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference and a sought-after revival preacher in the late 1950s. Sensing that his work as an evangelist had grown stale, he started a prayer group. The members grew close to one another as they prayed for Johnson regularly.
>
> Soon after that, he was doing a revival that proved to be difficult. He sent for his prayer group to come and they prayed for him before the service. When he stood to preach, Johnson was moved by God to ask several of the prayer group members to share a witness. It was a God-inspired moment. Those chosen to share were anointed and the congregation was electrified. Hearing lay people talk about what God was doing in their lives stirred the church. Johnson was led by the Spirit to not preach after that; he just gave an altar call. The people rushed forward to kneel and the altar service lasted more than an hour. It was the witness of laypeople rather than the preacher's sermon that stirred them.
>
> When vital lay witnesses described how they had been loyal to the church program, how they had served in many official capacities, and yet were lacking in a genuine experience of Christ, other lay people could readily identify with them. But their witness did not stop with describing an empty, meaningless Christian life. They went on to relate how their lives were changed through prayer and a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. Each of them shared relevant experiences of how their new life worked on the job, in the home, in the church fellowship, and in community life.
>
> From the first experiment with using laypersons on a mission, several discoveries were made: laypersons listened to other laypersons; laypersons were willing to discuss pointed problems with other laypersons; dialogue resulted in deeper commitment than traditional altar prayer times; the laity and clergy learned to participate as equals in a group and witnessing laypersons both inspired and encouraged others to witness.
>
> From that point on, when Johnson was invited to preach for revival services, he arranged in advance for his prayer group to come with him. During the meetings, he gave them opportunity to share. More pastors urged him to come to their churches. He would preach and intersperse laypeople to witness, but soon he discovered that power was released as the lay people told their stories.
>
> Gradually the weekend schedule began to shift, and his preaching was minimized and he became more of a moderator. Later he found that these open and honest, prayer-

[19] Sam M. Shoemaker, *Extraordinary Living for Ordinary Men* (Zondervan, 1965), 155-156.

> filled laypeople could be effective in leading small groups. Sunday morning altars were filled and prayer groups were started.
>
> Word spread and soon more invitations were coming in than Johnson could handle, so he chose and nurtured lay coordinators to conduct the missions. What began as a clergy-coordinated event became a lay-coordinated event and the Lay Witness Movement was launched. In 1960, it was incorporated as the Institute of Church Renewal.
>
> The Lay Witness Movement became ecumenical and spread to the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians, the Southern Baptists, the Disciples of Christ, and other denominations. The movement also went international, starting with the birthplace of Methodism, Great Britain. Lay Witness Missions have been held in Australia, New Zealand, England, Ireland, Mexico, the Philippines, and other countries around the world. They have also been conducted as district-wide or cluster events involving multiple churches, as well as in prisons, in the stockade at a military base, in retirement centers, and in retreat settings.[20]

This relational approach that morphed from clergy led events to lay persons testifying to what their relationship with God, meant to them as they lived their daily lives, impacted a great number of people. It was more peer to peer. The atmosphere was more relaxed and created more dialogue between the participants.

Dwight Zscheile is a noted scholar of the shifting patterns and contours of American congregational life, and how the changing aspects of American society are impacting them. In his 2017 publication, "*Who Is My Neighbor? The Church's Vocation in an Era of Shifting Community"* Zscheile "argues for local congregations paying renewed attention to the localized communities around them, as well as the new kinds of communities that have arisen in an age of new technological connections,"[21] Zscheile notes that one of the most common questions he receives when speaking with church groups about practices of Christian witness with their neighbors is, "Who is my neighbor?" He points out that this is the question that Jesus was asked by an expert in the law (Luke 10:29) in an exchange about how to inherit eternal life. Jesus tells

[20] Frank Billman, *Good News Magazine*, accessed November 16, 2025, https://goodnewsmag.org/the-revival-roots-of-the-lay-witness-mission.
[21] Dwight J. Zscheile, "Who Is My Neighbor? The Church's Vocation in an Era of Shifting Community," Word & World 37, no. 1 (2017): 27.

the story of the Good Samaritan an helps the hearers to have a more expansive understanding of neighbor that transcends religious and cultural differences. Zscheile observes further that

> Changes to the built environment and the rise of social media have both concentrated and created certain kinds of connections even as they have displaced and disconnected Americans from each other in various ways.
>
> This is a moment in which the church has an opportunity to reenvision and reclaim its identity and calling as a community of reconciliation amidst the unraveling of established structures and practices of belonging in American life.[22]

I found this article to be very helpful as the church looks to connect with non-churched households living within their ministry area. The greatest challenge I see is that the core members of existing congregation are older and therefore uncomfortable with new methodologies of connecting with individuals and groups outside of their current groups. I also see a reluctance in sharing one's faith journey with other people.

[22]Zscheile, "Who Is My Neighbor?, 27-28.

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

This project brings together theological conversations about church growth with a practical component by working with churches to enable them to embrace certain approaches in their own mission and outreach. The practical research was conducted with three churches. In preparation for research, I submitted my Research Proposal and received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Claremont School of Theology. Since this project involves activities that are consistent with the life and ministry of the congregation, no personal identifiable information of participants was collected.

There were no issues that required confidentiality, and no data was collected that could infringe on the dignity or privacy of members of the congregation.

I engaged in conversations with the leadership of several congregations and decided to conduct the project in three churches:

The three churches who participated in the research project are:

- St. George's Episcopal Church in Riverside from the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles.
- Christ Lutheran Church in West Covina from the Southwest California Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Christ Lutheran Church included both their historic congregation and emerging Chinese congregation in the project.
- San Marcos United Methodist Church from the California Pacific Conference of the United Methodist Church.

St. George's Episcopal Church

The congregation was represented by the Vicar (Pastor) and two lay members on the research team. Our initial meeting was held at the St. George's campus with the team and then follow up meetings were held via zoom.

In the initial meeting, we discussed the proposed research plan and viewed a web presentation to introduce the team to the value of data that can be gathered via the MissionInsite Community Information System. The system includes a data base called MOSAIC that identifies demographic, and lifestyle behaviors in a Mosaic Portrait for every household in the United States and localized religious information.

Following our initial meeting, the St. George's research team analyzed their current mission statement and how it states their commitment to reach non churched households. This informed their theological basis to engage in this research.

The MissionInsite system was used to plot their active congregants and display them on a map. Using the congregant plotting they was able to view each congregant's household location on a map and learned the Mosaic Portrait for each of their congregant's household. The MissionInsite system created a report that compared the Mosaic Portraits of the congregants' households to all households in the area. This provided the research team with the ability to see exactly where their congregants lived and then be able to analyze each of the represented neighborhoods. The analysis included population, race, age, income, household structure, generational presence, religious preferences and ministry interests.

Following their research, the team chose a project to connect with non-churched households. This information is part of the church's final written report.

The research team worked on the project from the end of August through the middle of November when they submitted their final written report.

Christ Lutheran Church

The congregation was represented by the Senior Pastor, TEEM Pastor (Theological Education for Emerging Ministries) and three lay persons on the research team. Our initial meeting was held at the Christ Lutheran campus with the team and then follow up meetings were held via zoom and in person.

In the initial meeting, we discussed the proposed research plan and viewed a web presentation to introduce the team to the value of data that can be gathered via the MissionInsite Community Information System. The system includes a data base called MOSAIC that identifies demographic, and lifestyle behaviors in a Mosaic Portrait for every household in the United States and localized religious information.

Following our initial meeting, the Christ Lutheran research team analyzed their current mission statement and how it states their commitment to reach non churched households. This informed their theological basis to engage in this research.

The MissionInsite system was used to plot their active congregants and display them on a map. Using the congregant plotting they was able to view each congregant's household location on a map and learned the Mosaic Portrait for each of their congregant's household for both their traditional congregation and the Chinese congregation. The MissionInsite system created a report that compared the Mosaic Portraits of the congregants' households to all households in the area for each congregation. This provided the research team with the ability to see exactly where their congregants lived and then be able to analyze each of the represented

neighborhoods. The analysis included population, race, age, income, household structure, generational presence, religious preferences and ministry interests.

Following their research, the team chose a project to connect with non-churched households. This information is part of the church's final written report.

The research team worked on the project from the end of August through the middle of November when they submitted their final written report.

San Marcos United Methodist Church

San Marcos United Methodist Church is a missional campus under the leadership of First United Methodist Church Escondido. San Marcos currently does not have a worshiping congregation. Worship is held at the First United Methodist Church Escondido campus. Their participation in this project added an additional missional focus of using their campus in partnership with community organizations that provide a new faith community at the San Marcos campus called the **Sanctuary on Mission: A Recovery Community Initiative.**

The research team for the church included the Associate Pastor of First United Methodist Church Escondido and two lay members of the former San Marcos congregation. Our initial meeting was held at the San Marcos campus with the team and then follow up meetings were held via zoom as well as in person.

In the initial meeting, we discussed the proposed research plan and viewed a web presentation to introduce the team to the value of data that can be gathered via the MissionInsite Community Information System. The system includes a data base called MOSAIC that identifies demographic, and lifestyle behaviors in a Mosaic Portrait for every household in the United States and localized religious information.

Following our initial meeting, the San Marcos research team analyzed their current mission statement and how it would interface with community agencies for effective use of their current building within the missional guidelines. They also used the MissionInsite community information to better understand the data available about each household within the ministry area. For San Marcos, the system identified ministry opportunities to support their missional commitment as stated in their written report.

The San Marcos UM Church team worked on the project from the beginning of August through the middle of November when they submitted their final written report.

The MissionInsite System

The MissionInsite system is delivered as an internet resource accessed by a registered user with a password. The system provides mapping capabilities for churches in the U.S. and reports of household data as stated below. Geographical reports include:

QuickInsite - The QuickInsite report looks at a user-defined geography and consists of Story View and Theme View sections. The Story View displays overall demographic information, such as population, educational attainment, median family income, and diversity. The Theme View goes into more detail about your study area's demographics, their changes over time, and Mosaic Lifestyle Segmentation Types. **Sample report in Appendix Figure 1**.

ExecutiveInsite - This ExecutiveInsite Report presents a demographic overview of your geographic study area. Data tables and graphs illustrate changes and trends for a range of insights. Some trend tables provide change over time, including five and ten-year forecasts. Color-coded tables and graphs help you easily identify changes. **Sample report in Appendix Figure 2**.

MinistryInsite - The MinistryInsite report focuses on practical applications of the 2025 American Beliefs Study Survey series. It includes life concerns and reasons for not being active in (or considering leaving) a religious congregation or community. You'll also find program and ministry preferences, along with traditional media and social media usage information for your study area. **Sample report in Appendix Figure 3**.

ReligiousInsite - The ReligiousInsite provides insights into community beliefs and religious preferences based on the 2025 American Beliefs Study Survey series. You'll find your study area's beliefs about God, Jesus, and social and moral values, along with religious preferences,

denominational affiliations, and faith and religious involvement. **Sample report in Appendix Figure 4**.

ComparativeInsite - The ComparativeInsite report compares a defined study area's demographic profile with your organization's core group of people. You'll see household, Mosaic, and financial insights about your study area's people and households as well as the outside community. **Sample report in Appendix Figure 5**.

As well as reports, there are two resource documents. The first is The Mosaic U.S.A. E-Handbook that provides a portrait view as classified by the data assigned to each household.

Welcome to the Mosaic USA E-Handbook

Successful organizations take the process of analyzing and understanding households seriously. They use it to maximize their engagement with households to increase loyalty, retention and value; and plan for the future.

The Mosaic USA E-Handbook provides a simple, clear and comprehensive guide that gives you all the information you need at your fingertips to help you in your day-to-day use of Mosaic. It helps you build a detailed understanding of households and their locations, and become conversant with the dimensions of the new American consumer and their household dynamics.

This latest version of Mosaic USA capitalizes on Experian's access to a wealth of new and detailed information on households in the United States. It seeks to:

i. Prioritize and bring order to the data chaos by determining the right household strategy
ii. Provide a deeper understanding of your household relations

Mosaic U.S.A. enables you to:

i. Precisely target your ideal household audience across communication campaigns
ii. Improve your understanding of targeting specific households
iii. Increase connection performance
iv. Maximize image conversion
v. Optimize household targeting to ensure that the right communication approach is matched to the right audience
vi. Improve your media planning across traditional and digital channels.
vii. Invest in future ministry with new households
viii. Anticipate challenges and plan for the future
ix. Analyze household behavior
x. Understand potential resistance

More than 300 data points have been used to build Mosaic USA. These have been selected as inputs to the classification based on their coverage, quality, consistency and sustainability. To be included for use, the data variables must enable accurate identification of, and discrimination between, a wide range of household characteristics.

They must also be updateable over time to ensure continuing accuracy in assignments of the Mosaic codes and meet the following criteria:

- Allows the identification and description of Mosaic segments that are not necessarily distinguished solely using census data.
- Ensures accuracy of Mosaic code by either household or neighborhood.
- Updated regularly to ensure that changes are monitored.
- Improves discrimination and allows for the identification of a wide range of household behaviors.

The following table illustrates the data areas included in the system.

Table 1: Data Areas in Mosaic USA

Demographics	Socio-economics	Location	Financial measures	Property characteristics
Age	Education/qualifications	Urbanity/rurality	Income	Tenure
Marital status	Occupation	Means of transport	Credit behaviour	Property value
Household composition	Industry	Travel to work time	Owner of multiple homes	Number of rooms
Length of residency	Hours worked		Social security/assistance	Year built
Presence of children	Home business			Number of dwellings
Number of occupants	Vehicle ownership			Rent amount
Ethnicity				Group quarters
Language ability				

The above table highlights primary data sources that inform church leadership with the depth of information available to better understand what is true about the lifestyles of households in their ministry area. This knowledge provides an enhanced ability to successfully communicate with non-church households.

The Mosaic U.S.A. System is built using the 9-digit zip code, created by the post office to have a tighter geographical identity of the location of a small cluster of household addresses within a zip code. The system has 19 primary portrait classifications with a total of 71 sub portraits. Each household address is assigned to one of the 71 sub portraits

Table 2: 19 Primary and 71 Sub Portrait Classifications

A Power Elite	A01	American Royalty
	A02	Platinum Prosperity
	A03	Kids and Cabernet
	A04	Picture Perfect Families
	A05	Couples with Clout
	A06	Jet Set Urbanites
B Flourishing Families	B07	Across the Ages
	B08	Babies and Bliss
	B09	Family Fun-tastic
	B10	Cosmopolitan Achievers
C Booming with Confidence	C11	Sophisticated City Dwellers
	C12	Golf Carts and Gourmets
	C13	Philanthropic Sophisticates
	C14	Boomers and Boomerangs
D Suburban Style	D15	Sport Utility Families
	D16	Settled in Suburbia
	D17	Cul de Sac Diversity
	D18	Suburban Nightlife
E Thriving Boomers	E19	Consummate Consumers
	E20	No Place Like Home
	E21	Unspoiled Splendor

F Promising Families	F22	Fast Track Couples
	F23	Families Matter Most
G Young City Solos	G24	Ambitious Singles
	G25	Urban Edge
H Bourgeois Melting Pot	H26	Progressive Assortment
	H27	Life of Leisure
	H28	Everyday Moderates
	H29	Destination Recreation
I Family Union	I30	Potlucks and the Great Outdoors
	I31	Hard Working Values
	I32	Steadfast Conventionalists
	I33	Balance and Harmony
J Autumn Years	J34	Suburban Sophisticates
	J35	Rural Escape
	J36	Settled and Sensible
K Significant Singles	K37	Wired for Success
	K38	Modern Blend
	K39	Metro Fusion
	K40	Bohemian Groove

L Blue Sky Boomers	L41	Booming and Consuming
	L42	Rooted Flower Power
	L43	Homemade Happiness
M Families in Motion	M44	Creative Comfort
	M45	Growing and Expanding
N Pastoral Pride	N46	True Grit Americans
	N47	Countrified Pragmatics
	N48	Rural Southern Bliss
	N49	Touch of Tradition
O Singles and Starters	O50	Full Steam Ahead
	O51	Digital Savvy
	O52	Urban Ambition
	O53	Colleges and Cafes
	O54	Influenced by Influencers
	O55	Family Troopers

P Cultural Connections	P56	Mid-scale Medley
	P57	Modest Metro Means
	P58	Heritage Heights
	P59	Expanding Horizons
	P60	Striving Forward
	P61	Simple Beginnings
Q Golden Year Guardians	Q62	Enjoying Retirement
	Q63	Footloose and Family Free
	Q64	Established in Society
	Q65	Mature and Wise
R Aspirational Fusion	R66	Ambitious Dreamers
	R67	Passionate Parents
S Thrifty Habits	S68	Small Town Sophisticates
	S69	Urban Legacies
	S70	Thrifty Singles
	S71	Modest Retirees

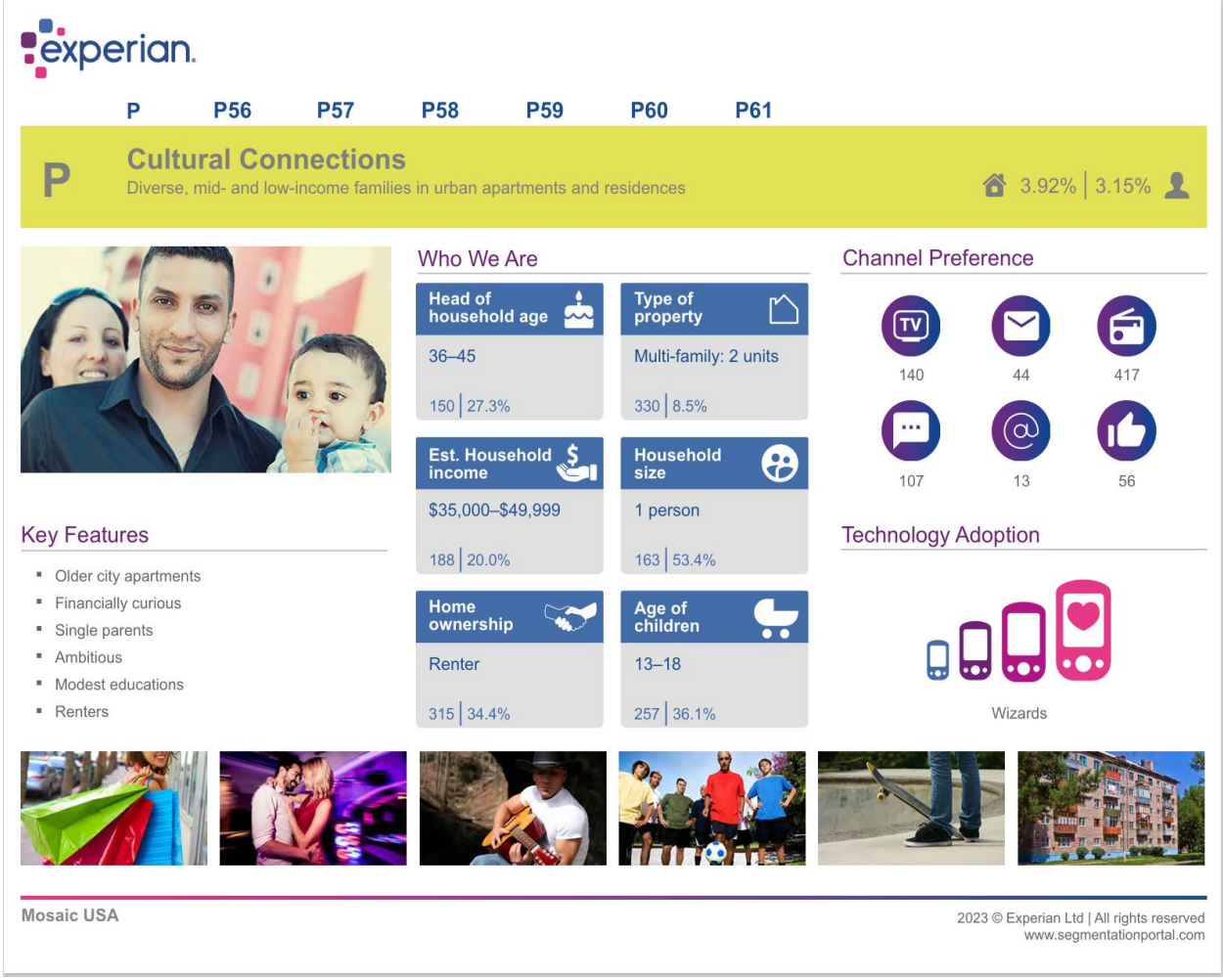

Figure 6. Page 1 of the information provided for each of the 71 Portraits

Chanel Preference - Measures the likelihood of responding to each of the communication channels by index. >100 indicates these individuals are more likely to respond to communication using this channel. <100 indicates they are less likely to respond.

Broadcast/Streaming TV

Direct Mail

Radio

Mobile, SMS, Text Message

Email

Social Media

Technology Adoption – Shows how likely the group/type is to engage with technology. Each group is allocated to one of the 4 bands.

Wizards – "Technology is life." Technology plays an important and broad role in a Wizard's life. These individuals cannot live without the internet or imaging life without new electronic gadgets.
Journeymen – "Technology is an important part of my life." Journeymen have become skilled users of technology. They are knowledgeable about technology but not always their top priority.

Apprentices – "Technology is changing my life." Apprentices take advantage of using the internet often to get needed information. New gadgets enhance their lives, but they are sensitive to costs.

Novices – "Technology has a limited impact on my life." Novices are disconnected from emerging technology and resistant to adopting a new technology focused life. Interested if simple to use.

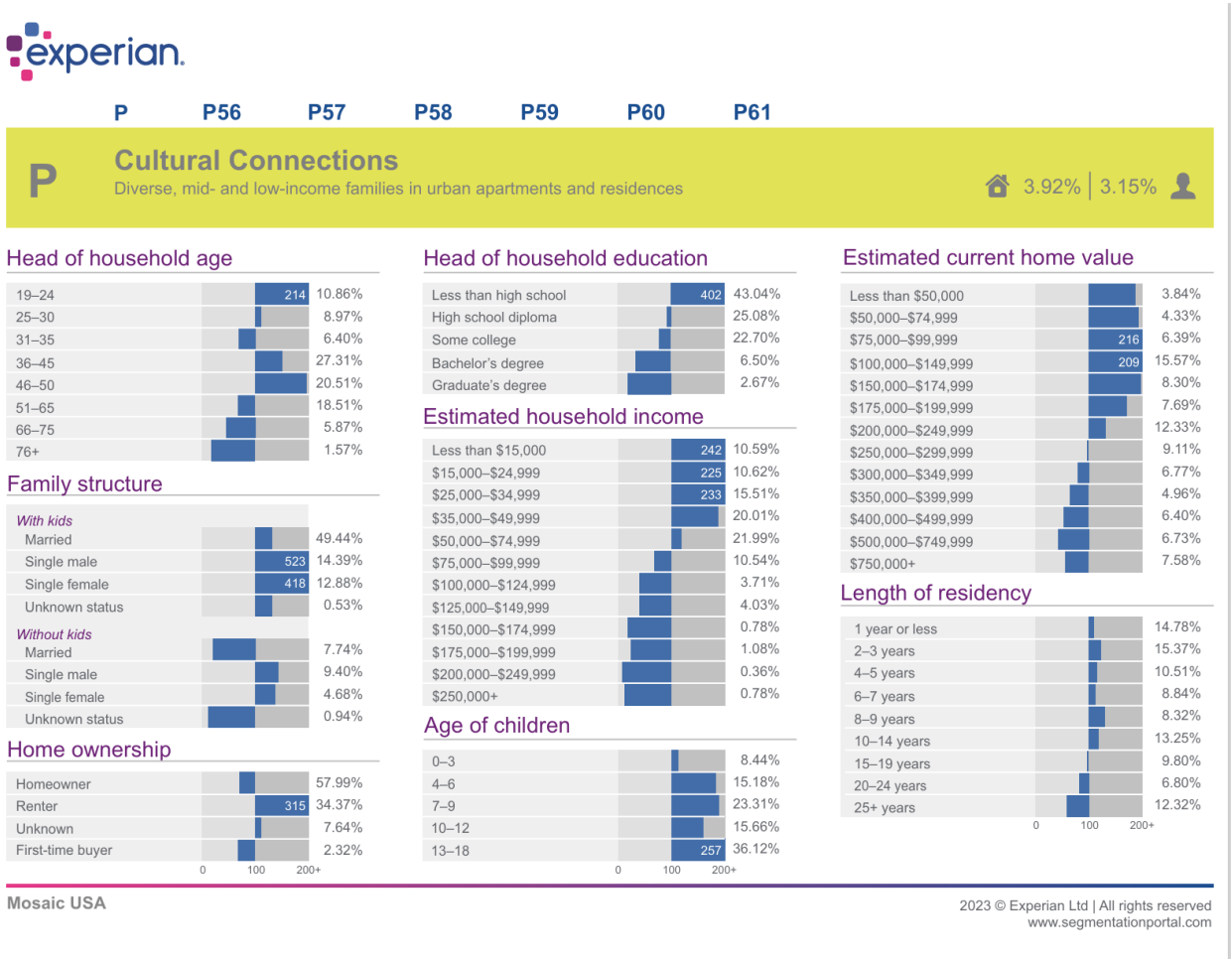

Figure 7. Page 2 of the information provided for each of the 71 Portraits

Top right of the above second page of each portrait provides the percent of the households and individual persons in the U.S. classified in this Portrait.

Below are the explanations on the use of the Mean and Index for the second page of each Portrait.

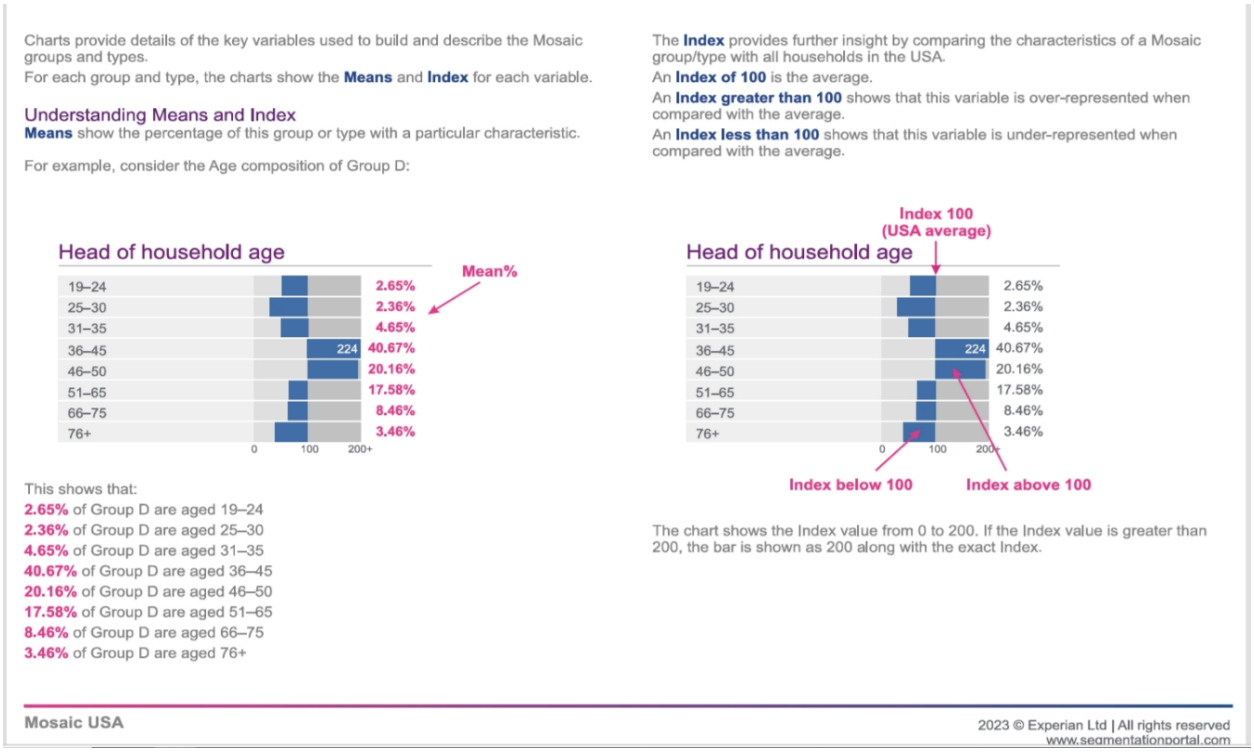

Figure 8. Portrait Mean and Index for Tables on Portrait Page 2

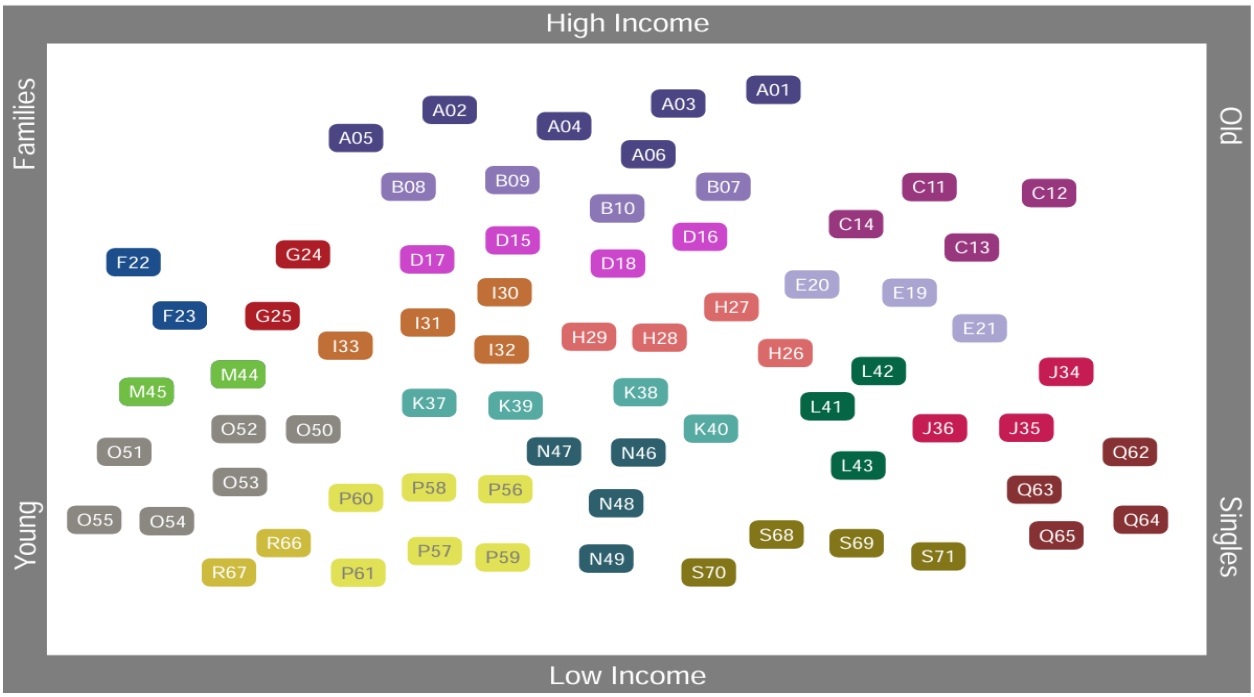

Figure 9. Provides a visual representation of how income, age and household structure influence where each Mosaic Portrait is located in the system

The second resource document is the MissionImpact Guide.

MissionImpact Guide

The MissionImpact Guide, by Tom Bandy, (A Church Consultant) is a concise summary of ministry applications for each of the 71 Mosaic Portrait types described by Mosaic research. It is specifically designed for local church and denominational planning and for the faith-based non-profit agencies accountable to them.

This resource contains the Mosaic Portrait description for each lifestyle type, followed by **ministry applications** suggestions based on over 20 years of research by Rev. Bandy. The sections in the report are **Leadership, Hospitality, Education, Small Groups, Worship, Outreach, Facilities, Finances, and Communication.**

The sample for Portrait H26 is figure 10 in the appendix.

Chapter Four

Outcomes

St. George's Episcopal Church, Riverside, CA

Report on Community Mission Engagement from St. George's Episcopal Church

St. George's Episcopal Church in Riverside is a loving Christ-filled family that provides an inclusive home of liturgy, music, outreach, and fellowship.

We are a supportive place for change as we empower each other through the Holy Spirit to do God's work of social awareness, environmental consciousness, and spiritual growth. In thanksgiving for our abundance, we are called to serve the community.
Come join us on the journey!

~ Mission Statement for St. George's

Our mission statement is one that truly represents our community. And, it is possible that it is so general that it doesn't give us a particular area to focus our engagement. When we met with Peter for the first time, we were intrigued by the possibility of looking at our mission statement from another perspective, one that encouraged us to engage with the local community in ways that we had not before.

Due to summer schedules, we didn't start meeting with Peter until early September. Understanding his need to report on our advancement with the project prior to December, we looked for a simple way to connect our mission statement with the wider community within a small window of time.

Thinking about our community and opportunities in the future, we discerned that our call was to reach out in general to the surrounding areas, especially the areas that are north of us and which are growing, to share with them a progressive vision of Christianity. We understand that we are in an area that has more conservative churches than progressive ones, and the focus on Christian nationalism in the broader media can present Christianity as a monolith rather than many communities of different peoples, theologies and worship styles.

In addition, St. George's has served the LGBTQIA+ community for decades and continues to focus on advocacy and support in our ministries. Given this, we saw in our mission statement an invitation to be more vocal about who we are and what we can offer, specifically in a mailing campaign. Given our time frame, we decided to focus on an invitation to our Advent services.

During our meetings with Peter, he helped us understand the various demographics that are involved in our church community and then looked for that specific demographic in the areas to the growing communities north of us. We built a mailer around this and will be sending it out the first week in December.

While we have not sent this out, and so cannot report on the response, we believe that just sharing about a progressive Christian community in Riverside is something that may be received positively by recipients, even if they do not come to a Sunday service.

In addition, this act has energized our community. I have heard from a number of community members that they support this project and are grateful that people in the larger community will know that there is a welcoming and affirming Christian community in their midst. We have talked about including this in the budget for 2026, knowing that these campaigns have to run several times for optimal results.

Overall, this project has been very positive for St. George's. We are thinking more about how important it is that people know we are an option, which opens into conversations about evangelizing and what it looks like for us to invite people to church. We are also thinking about the wider community in new ways which can only be helpful, as we consider what needs are neighbors have that may not be as obvious as needs such as food, housing security, and advocacy.

Hope is also a need, and knowing that an affirming church is present, preaching the gospel, may bring hope to people even if they never join our community.

Please see the postcard below that we will be sending out.

The Rev. Dr. Karri Backer
she/her
Vicar
Diane David, Member Project Study
Mary Simons, Member Project Study

The map below displays the distance the 63 congregant households live from the church. Of the congregants, 61.91% live within 4 miles of the church.

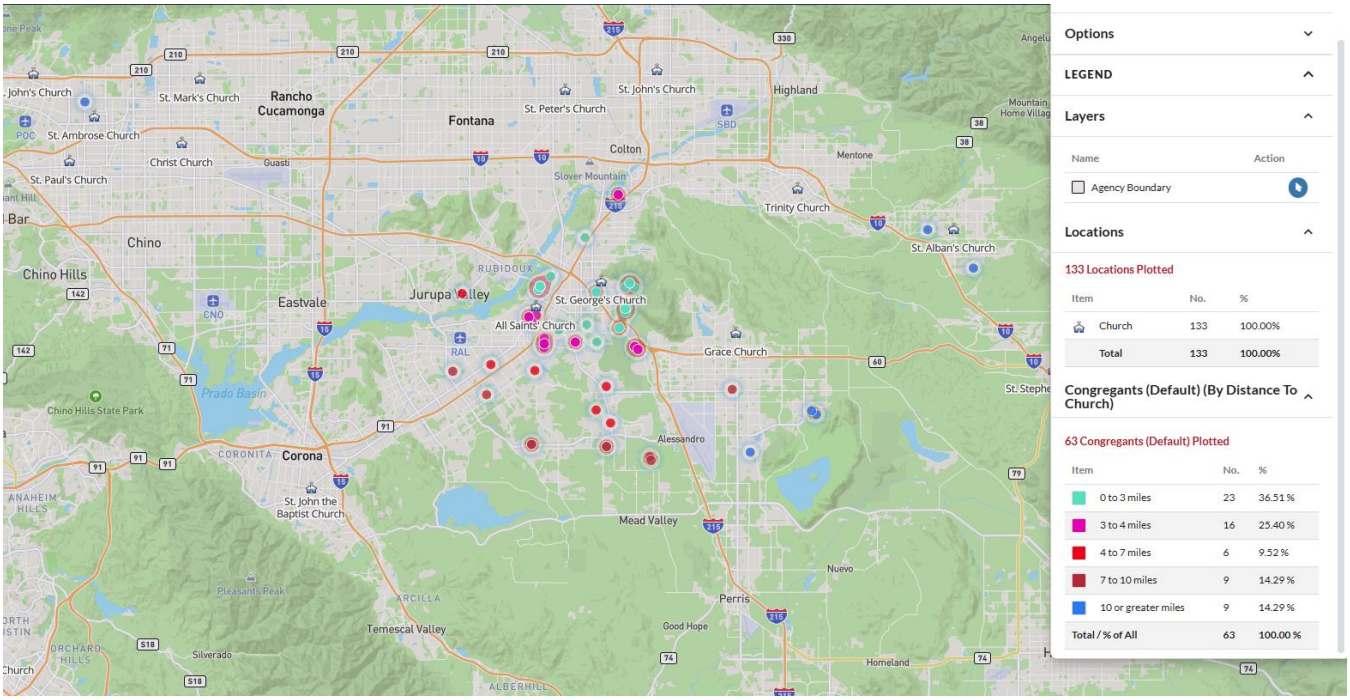

Figure 11. Map of congregants' households in relation to the church location

The ComparativeInsite report identified that the largest congregant households in our ministry area is H26 in the Mosaic system. The MissionInsite system then identified 2,000 H26 Mosaic households north of the church in High Grove, Grand Terrace, and Colton that was chosen to receive the Advent postcard mailing. **The ComparativeInsite report and three additional reports that informed our decisions are provided in the Appendix, Figure 12, Figure 13, Figure 14, and Figure 15.**

Figure 16. Advent Card Sent to 2000 H26 Households

Report on Mission Integration and Community Context for

Christ Lutheran Church, West Covina, CA

"An Integrated System Approach to Outreach Ministry: Connecting Congregations with non-church (non-churched) Households."

Christ Lutheran Church, West Covina, CA.
Congregation Project Final Report November 15, 2025

Research Project Committee:
Pastor Misael Fajardo Perez, Sr. Pastor
Pastor Peter Pan, TEEM Pastor, Chinese Congregation
Scott McGookin, Project Committee
Chair Ernie Johnson, Committee Member
Rose Webb, Committee Member

Guidance: Xavier Peter Wernett, Doctoral Candidate
Claremont School of Theology

1. Introduction:

During the Summer of 2025 Christ Lutheran Church of West Covina was invited to participate in a research study, entitled "An Integrated System Approach to Outreach Ministry Connecting Congregations with non-church Households." The study was conducted by Xavier Peter Wernett, a Doctoral Candidate from the Claremont School of Theology (CST) under the supervision of Dr. Lincoln E. Galloway of the Claremont School of Theology.

The purpose of the research was to examine the need for a process in local congregations that provides theological grounding for ministry efforts that utilize household lifestyle information to connect with non-church households. Christ Lutheran's participation in the study was to contribute to a better understanding of how the use of household socio-economic and religious data can be used to connect to congregations with non-church households.

Christ Lutheran's involvement was one part of three-congregational leadership teams from different congregations studying the households living in our individual churches local ministry area, creating a plan to connect with our neighbors and then implementing the plan to report initial results over an approximate four-month period.

Following our agreement to participate, our project committee met with Doctoral Candidate Xavier Peter Wernett in a series of five meetings where we discussed the plan to participate in the study that would culminate with implementation of the plan with an "event" prior to November 15, 2025.

The congregational research included use of MissionInsite's community-based information system which uses Experian, a big data and technology company.

The goal of participation of Christ Lutheran Church was for us to participate in a project that sought to address the need for a process to articulate how our current theological approach informs our current ministry and its relevance within our community. This exercise was intended to allow us to see and report on what current activities are in place that interact with the community and if any are focused on the non-churched households.

The congregation also closely looked at our churches current theological and the demographic information along with data and insights provided in the MissionInsite information for our mission area that is defined by the location of 80% of our active worship attendees.

Following the discussion by our project committee we were asked to create a vision and a theological and practical plan for an event to facilitate engagement of our neighbors that includes insights and learnings from the MissionInsite information.

Subsequently our project committee worked with the congregation to implement the plan (event). The project committee met and provided feedback to perfect our plan and has started working to envision other activities that could be used for engagement within the community where we are located.

I. **Congregation Mission Statement and its influence on reaching our neighbors (Outreach):**

The current mission statement of Christ Lutheran Church West Covina is:

TO GLORIFY GOD THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT OUR MISSION IS TO
INVOLVE ALL PEOPLE IN PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST
by WORSHIP,
by FELLOWSHIP, by OUTREACH,
and
by CARING MINISTRIES.

MINISTRY VISION

WE OF CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH ACCEPT THE LORD'S CALL TO MISSION AND
MINISTRY. WE TRUST IN THE INSPIRATION AND EMPOWERMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
TO GU/DEUS.
... IN WORSHIP,
WE PURSUE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.
WE CELEBRATE GOD'S PRESENCE IN LUTHERAN CONTEMPORARY AND TRADITIONAL WORSHIP.
WE SING, PRAY AND REJOICE IN THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S GIFTS. WE INVOLVE

ALL AGES IN OUR CELEBRATION.
... IN FELLOWSHIP,
WE ENJOY OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.
WE LEARN THE WAY OF JESUS THROUGH BIBLE STUDY AND SUNDAY SCHOOL.
WE ASPIRE TO BE A "HIGH TOUCH" CHURCH IN THE "HIGH TECH" WORLD.
WE GATHER IN GROUPS TO SOCIALIZE, EMPATHIZE OR APOLOGIZE.
...IN OUTREACH,
WE EXTEND OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.
WE OPEN OURSELVES AND OUR CHURCH, WITH DAY SCHOOL, TO BE A VISIBLE
AND VIABLE SERVICE IN OUR COMMUNITY.
WE EXPRESS OUR LOVE OF CHRIST THOUGH WORD AND DEED.
... IN CARING MINISTRIES,
WE NURTURE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.
WE CARE FOR AND OFFER COMPASSION TO THOSE IN NEED, PAIN OR SUFFERING.
WE ACTIVELY SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH LOCALLY AND WORLD WIDE.
WE DEMONSTRATE CONCERN THROUGH THE EXTENSION OF OUR HANDS, AND
THE LANGUAGE OF OUR HEARTS.

Project Committee Comments/Observation with regard to the current Mission Statement.

The ministries at Christ Lutheran Church West Covina could benefit by updating the "Outreach Section" of our congregations current Ministry Vision.

Modifications would reflect the closure of our Day School, the presence of our growing Mandarin Chinese Ministry and prospectively other ministries to better serve the overall demographics of our neighbors.

The current Constitution of Christ Lutheran Church West Covina reads:

Chapter 4.
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
C4.0l. The Church is a people created by God in Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, called and sent to bear witness to God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying activity in the world
C4.02. To participate in God's mission, this congregation as a part of the Church shall:

- Worship God in proclamation of the Word and administration of the sacraments and through lives of prayer, praise, thanksgiving, witness, and service.
- Proclaim God's saving Gospel of justification by grace for Christ's sake through faith alone, according to the apostolic witness in the Holy Scripture, preserving and transmitting the Gospel faithfully to future generations.

- Carry out Christ's Great Commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ and by doing all ministry with a global awareness consistent with the understanding of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier of all.
- Serve in response to God's love to meet human needs, caring for the sick and the aged, advocating dignity and justice for all people, working for peace and reconciliation among the nations, and standing with the poor and powerless, and committing itself to their needs.
- Nurture its members in the Word of God so as to grow in faith and hope and love, to see daily life as the primary setting for the exercise of their Christian calling, and to use the gifts of the Spirit for their life together and for their calling in the world.
- Manifest the unity given to the people of God by living together in the love of Christ and by joining with other Christians in prayer and action to express and preserve the unity which the Spirit gives.

C4.03. To fulfill these purposes, this congregation shall:

- Provide services of worship at which the Word of God is preached and the sacraments are administered.
- Provide pastoral care and assist all members to participate in this ministry.
- Challenge, equip, and support all members in carrying out their calling in their daily lives and in their congregation.
- Teach the Word of God.
- Witness to the reconciling Word of God in Christ, reaching out to all people.
- Respond to human need, work for justice and peace, care for the sick and the suffering, and participate responsibly in society.
- Motivate its members to provide financial support for the congregation's ministry and the ministry of other parts of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- Foster and participate in interdependent relationships with other congregations, the synod, and the churchwide organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- Foster and participate in ecumenical relationships consistent with churchwide policy.

C.4.04. This congregation shall develop an organizational structure to be described in the by-laws. The Congregation Council shall prepare descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, task force, or other organizational groups and shall review their actions. Such descriptions shall be contained in continuing resolutions of the Congregation Committees Council.

C4.05. This congregation shall, from time to time, adopt a mission statement, which will provide specific directions for its programs.

C4.06 References herein to the nature of the relationship between the three expressions of the church congregation, synod, and the churchwide organization - as being interdependent or as being in a partnership relationship describe the mutual responsibility of these expressions in God's mission and the fulfillment of the purposes of this church as described in this chapter, and do not imply or describe the creation of partnerships, co-ventures, agencies, or other legal relationships recognized in civil law.

Printed on: 12/18/19

III. Use of MissionInsite Data and Demographics

Survey of Existing Members:
The first step of the project committee was to survey the existing members of both the English (9:30 a.m. service) and Mandarin (11:00 a.m. service) as to the key reasons they chose to make Christ Lutheran Church West Covina (CLCWC) their church home. In a single page survey we requested that members provide five (5) words as to what brought them to CLCWC and why they keep coming back.

We conducted the survey to identify the guiding principles of our existing members. A copy of the single page survey and a spreadsheet with the feedback received can be found later in the report.

Plotting Addresses of Members onto a Map:
The committee also plotted the addresses of all of our current members on to a map allowing us to see the geographical location where each member lives. 238 congregants (total people) within 115 households were plotted on a map. This geographical area became known as "The Study Area". The committee then looked at clusters of members and the neighborhood demographics of persons living in all the neighborhoods that members of Christ Lutheran Church members live and then at the demographics of the neighborhoods within 1-mile of the Christ Lutheran Church campus. (The map depicting where each member lives can be found in the Appendix to this report.)

Reviewing the Demographic Information of Members and their Neighborhoods:
The demographic information provided by MissionInsite revealed to us that overall our member resided in neighborhoods where most persons were between 51 and 75 years of age and that most were married without kids in the household. The demographic information also told us that our members live in neighborhoods that have an estimated annual household income of $75,000 to $250,000+. (This level of income places our members in neighborhoods that have a substantially higher household income than those living in other neighborhoods.) The demographic information also revealed to the committee that the neighborhoods in which our members live have a higher level of education than those living in other neighborhoods meaning more persons having Bachelor's Degrees and Graduate Degrees than most other neighborhoods. There is also greater propensity for the Head of Household to be of a Professional or Technical occupation than in other neighborhoods and the neighborhood break out of white collar worker to blue collar worker is about equal. There is little projected change expected to occur in Study Area except that Adult Educational Attainment, the demographic that indicates the general level of education of adults 25 and older, is projected to go even higher. Also, based upon the information provided by MissonInsite, the trend of people in our Study Area is to have an extremely strong agreement and belief that strong families are key to social stability with activity in a Religious Congregation or Community increasing.

Committee Finding:
Members of Christ Lutheran Church West Covina have a greater propensity to live in neighborhoods comprised of Cosmopolitan Achievers; Philanthropic Sophisticates;

Progressive Assortment; or Bohemian Groove persons as defined by their Mosaic Segment. Additionally, each Mosaic segment has a preferred communication preference.

The MissionInsite reports prepared for our Study Area and sub-area can be found in the Appendix.

IV. Project Planning and Implementation Process

The committee agreed on the necessity that any activity or event we would facilitate would need to get the attention and interest of the current members of the congregation as well as the community.

We decided to conduct a **"Blessing of the Animals"** event during the first weekend in October. This activity was thought to appeal to both the congregation and the community in that many of the residents of the community (our neighbors) have no children at home, yet many of our neighbors have a variety of pets.

The Blessing of the Animals is based upon St. Frances of Assisi who blessed all animals. The spiritual elements of a Blessing of the Animals ceremony includes acknowledging animals as part of God's creation, celebrating the sacred bond between humans and animals, promoting ecological stewardship, and expressing gratitude for the joy and companionship animals bring.

This activity had appeal to both the congregation (English & Mandarin) and the community as well. To promote the activity/event volunteers distributed flyers to animal hospitals and other complimentary businesses; posted the event on social media; promoted the activity to the families of Christ Lutheran Preschool; and made announcements at church each Sunday for 3-weeks prior to the event in addition to publishing it in the church bulletin and on the church website.

Eight dogs showed up and were blessed by Pastor Misa and Pastor Pan. A canopy was placed on the concrete patio in the area by the rose garden near the preschool and youth room. Cookies and lemonade were provided and attendees enjoyed socializing before and after the event. Savory snacks and water were also provided to the dogs as permitted by their owners. The dogs arrived in the vehicles of their humans. One attendee walked his dog over and another couple were out walking and they stopped by with their dog as well.

After the event the committee held a meeting to debrief and discuss what went well and what could be improved upon. It was felt that a similar event should occur next year (in 2026) and that it would be advantageous to have more animal hospitals participating and more dogs and other animals present at the blessings. It was agreed that having more lead time to promote the event would allow for greater outreach to animal hospitals and other complimentary businesses; posting and boosting on all social media to members and the community; and distributing more flyers and posters in advance.

V. Impact on Future Activities & Reflection on the Church Study Project

Our congregation recently began the critical process of identifying and understanding the evolving demographics of our local community, recognizing a previous limitation in having concrete information about our neighbors. The MissionInsite tool proved invaluable by providing specific data on lifestyle, needs, educational, and financial resources. The most actionable insights were derived from the Mosaic report, which offered a granular, concrete overview of the populations geographically closest to our church.

A key challenge in the project was translating this data into a clear missional opportunity. However, the most profound insight emerged from identifying the significant life concerns within our neighbor profiles. A recurrent theme across the specifics was a deep yearning for connection and community, with many individuals struggling with loneliness and isolation. We also identified core community values, notably health and wellness, and the strong presence of households with pets. Furthermore, the study surfaced a common barrier to church association: the perception that people in the church are "too judgmental.

Based on these findings, we launched a pilot activity designed to demonstrate a welcoming community that actively valued health and pet-friendliness. We leveraged social media for promotion, recognizing it as the primary communication channel for our target demographics. While the initial turnout from the specific group we sought to reach was low, the experience yielded a crucial learning: a much deeper understanding of our neighbors and concrete guidance for planning more effective, data-driven ministry activities moving forward.
This work has already facilitated a significant strategic move. In our goal to expand outreach capacity to the Asian community, we utilized the demographic specifics from Mission lnsite to successfully inform and support a grant proposal for an associate pastor focused on this demographic. The data provided the necessary confidence and justification for pursuing this vital outreach initiative, enabling us to better live out our mission with these new neighbors God has placed before us.

1. In five individual words, describe the key reasons you chose to make this your church home.
These can reflect what attracted you, what keeps you coming back, or what makes this church feel meaningful to you.
Example: *"welcoming, inspiring, family, worship, music, truth*

Would you like to briefly explain why you chose those five words? *(Optional)*
Feel free to share a short explanation or personal story that gives more context to your choices.

Table 3. Congregational Survey

Reason									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Acceptance									
Activities									
Adult activities brought us to church to be w friends									
Bible-based / Gospel Based	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**				
Christ centered									
Bible studies									
Choir	**X**	**X**							
Close to home									
Enjoy Youth Activities									
Comfortable									
Commitment									
communion	**X**	**X**							
Communion every Sunday									
Community that the church provides									
Convenient parking									
Duty									
ELCA Lutheran church									
Events of the past (Mission to Mexico Z003-2007J									
Faith									
Family	**X**	**X**	**X**						
Familiar	**X**	**X**							
Fellowship	**X**	**X**	**X**						
Friendly	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**	**X**		
Portos									
Friends	**X**	**X**	**X**						
Fulfilling									
!Grounding									
!Jesus									
Kind members									
Inspiring									
Involvement									
Giving Back									
Growing									
Happiness									
Holy Spirit presence									

lnclusionary	X	X							
inclusionary -Chinese Ministry	X	X							
Inspiring									
Leadership									
Sermon									
Messages are down to earth									
Ministries									
Music	X	l(	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Music Variety (old and new)	X	X					-- ·----		-
MUSIC **upbeat**									
Christina	X	X							
Nightengale									
Soloists									
Neighborhood									
Outreach (social ministry)									
Pastor									
Pastor Kooseman was a joy to listen to									
Pastor Misa									
Pastoral follow-up									
Participatory worship service									
Praise **Band**	X	X							
Sanctuary is beautiful									
Service opportun1y1es	X	X							
Solid long term Pastor (Pastor Nelson)									
Supportive									
Trum	X	X							
Ministries									
Ministries we can feel proud to be part ot									
Welcoming	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Worship	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Worship time	X								
Worship (Semi-traditional)	X	X							
Youth program									

Key Considerations
for Organizing a Blessing of the Animals

Organizing a "Blessing of the Pets/ Animals" event for Christ Lutheran Church and surrounding neighborhood was a wonderful way to engage the community, honor creation, and welcome people (and their pets!) in a joyful, inclusive way.

Key Considerations for Organizing a Blessing of the Pets

---

1. **Choose the Date and Time**

- **Traditional date:** Often held around **October** the feast day of **St. Francis of Assisi,** patron saint of animals and ecology.
- **Alternative:** Choose a weekend (Saturday or Sunday afternoon) when people are more likely to attend.
- A void extreme weather Caution (too hot or cold).

2. **Select and Prepare the Location**

- **Outdoors** Is usually best: church lawn, courtyard, or nearby park.
- Ensure there's:
  - Shade or tent covering
  - Seating for attendees
  - Water stations for pets
  - Trash cans and poop bags
- Have a **rain plan** (indoor option or reschedule date).

Safety and Comfort

- Ask attendees to **keep pets leashed or in carriers** at all time'-.
- Encourage vaccinations and good behavior.
- Have volunteers or signage directing:
  - **Pet relief areas**
  - **First aid** (human and pet kits)
  - Parking and Drop-off zones

Create a Liturgical Structure

- Keep it short and accessible -**20-30 minutes** is ideal.
- Sample elements:
  - Welcome and opening prayer
  - Reading (e.g., Genesis 1:24-25, Psalm 104, or a quote from St. Francis)
  - Brief reflection or homily
  - **Individual or group blessing** - laying on of hands. etc.)
  - Closing prayer or hymn

Optional:

- Memorial moment for deceased pets

- Pet-themed hymn or song (e.g., *All Things Bright and Beautiful)*

Event Activities (Optional)

- Photo booth with pets
- Local vendors or animal shelter
- Kids' activity table (crafts, pet coloring pages}
- Pet costume contest (if it suits your crowd)

Promotion and Communication

- **Flyers, posters,** and **social media** (Facebook, Instagram, Next-door)
- Include:
    - Date/time/location
    - What to bring
    - Type of pet's welcome
    - Blessing schedule
    - Contact info
- Ask local pet stores, groomers, and vets to share the flyer
- Church bulletins and newsletters

Community Partnerships

- Invite:
    - Local **animal shelters** or rescue groups (adoption info, donations)
    - **Veterinarians** for health check stations or Q&A
    - Local leaders or other faith groups

Volunteers

- Greeters
- Set-up and clean-up crew
- Hospitality (water, snacks)
- Photography
- Animal handlers or runners if needed

Logistics and Supplies

- Tables, chairs
- Microphone/sound system
- Blessing certificates (optional but popular!)
- Holy water or oil
- Dog/cat treats
- Waste bags and disposal bins
- First-aid kits

Follow-up

- Thank-you email or social post
- Share photos and reflections
- Invite attendees to future church events

- Consider making it an **annual tradition**

Checklist
Choose date and venue, secure necessary permits, create flyer and promote, prepare blessing liturgy, organize volunteers, set up event area, gather supplies (treats, water, etc.) execute event, welcome pets, clean up and follow up.

The following two Figures identify the household locations of the active congregants for the primary and Chinese worshiping congregations used in planning for “A Blessing for the Pets”.

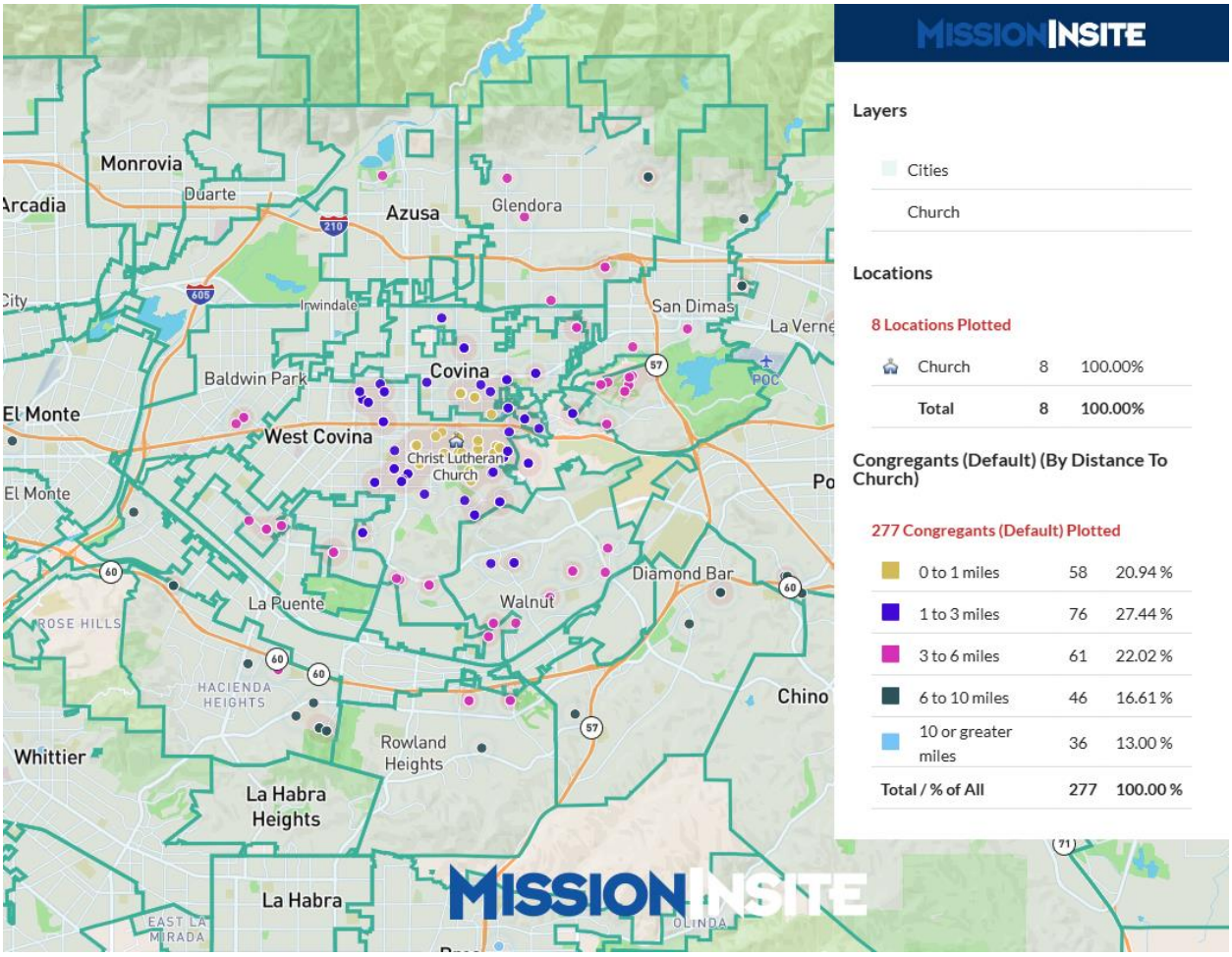

Figure 17. Map displays location of the primary worshiping congregant households in the ministry area by the distance they live from the church
20.94% live within a mile of the church
48.38% live within 3 miles of the church
70.40% live within 6 miles of the church

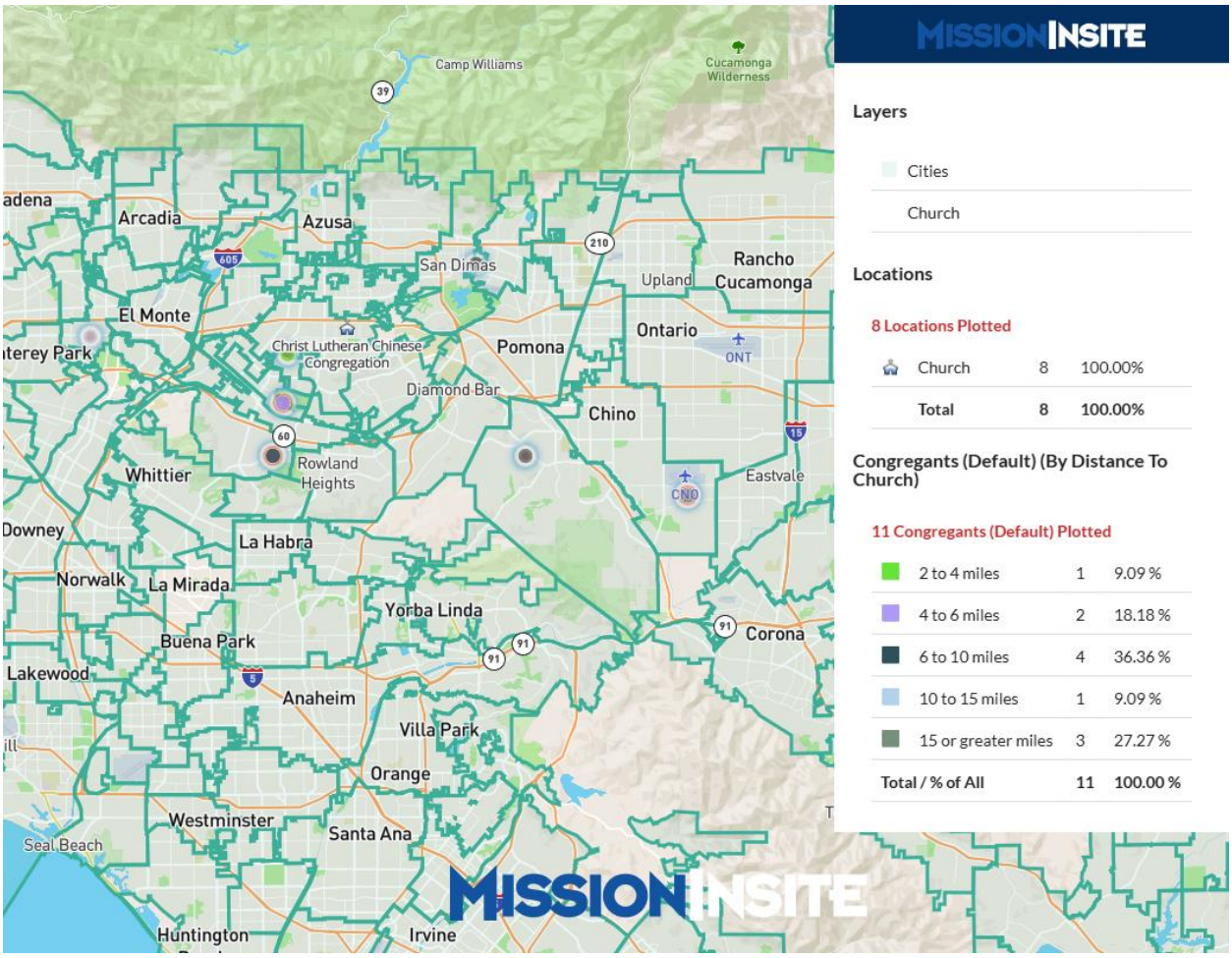

Figure 18. Map displays location of the majority of the Chinese worshiping congregant households in the ministry area by the distance they live from the church
63.63% live within 10 miles of the church

Primary Congregant Mosaic Portraits of Ministry Area
In the primary ministry area where 85.92% of the congregants live in 115 households the top three congregant Mosaic households are B10 with 51.30%, H26 with 21.74% and C13 with 14.78%. The reports illustrating this information are found in the Primary Mosaic Households, ComparativeInsite, B10 MissionImpact Guide, H26 MissionImpact Guide and the C13 MissionImpact Guide in **Appendix, Figure 19, Figure 20, Figure 21, Figure 22, and Figure 23**

A number of neighborhoods were analyzed regarding presence of congregant households and their Mosaic Profile. These reports for each neighborhood are found in the Appendix, Figures 24, Figure 25, Figure 26, Figure 27, Figure 28

Promotional Material/Social Media Posts and Photographs displayed in Appendix, Figure 29

Report on Mission Integration and Community Context for San Marcos United Methodist Church, A Missional Congregation of First United Methodist Church of Escondido, California

Congregational Mission Statements and Integration with Community Demographics

First United Methodist Church of Escondido Theological Mission Statement:

> We believe the church is called to be a Sanctuary for healing and reconnection, where God's grace meets us in our deepest need. In Jesus Christ, we encounter a God who bears our wounds, breaks the power of shame, and opens the way to recovery and new life. The Holy Spirit gathers us as a recovery community – addicts, loved ones of addicts, spiritual refugees, and those who walk beside them – into a story of transformation and grace.
>
> Guided by radical welcome, story-based spirituality, and a trauma informed theology of grace, we proclaim that no one is beyond healing and no one's journeys alone. Here, faith is not about perfection but about process; Healing is not linear, but always possible. Together, through worship, testimony, shared meals, mutual support, and spiritual growth, we embody God's radical hospitality so that lives are restored, families renewed, and the world glimpses the Kingdom of heaven breaking in here and now.

The mission of First United Methodist Church, Escondido is to **"live out Christ's love in our community.** *Our mission is to embody his teachings of love, justice, and acceptance, being sources of grace and hope. Through meaningful action, we serve and impact our community, fostering positive change and creating a more inclusive society".* This inspired our approach by emphasizing transformation through grace and inclusion. In developing San Marcos United Methodist Church as a new faith community, we sought to translate that same Wesleyan call into a context of recovery, trauma healing, and spiritual reconnection.

Our theological statement for the San Marcos campus, *"We believe the church is called to be a sanctuary for healing and reconnection, where God's grace meets us in our deepest need…"* echoes the broader mission while targeting populations identified in our demographic study as those who are struggling with addiction, shame, mental health challenges, and religious disillusionment (Theological Mission Statement, Aug. 2025; MinistryInsite Nov. 2025). This new faith community at the San Marcos campus will be called the **Sanctuary on Mission: A Recovery Community Initiative.**

Integration with MissionInsite Data:

MissionInsite analysis for San Marcos (92069 Zip Code), revealed a community with modest growth, increasing ethnic diversity (nearly 45% Hispanic/Latine, 11% Asian, and 37% White) and an aging population with significant health and family stress indicators

(ExecutiveInsite, Nov. 2025; QuickInsite, Nov. 2025). Top community concerns include **mental health (21.8%), depression (17.1%), substance abuse (7.9%), family stress, and financial anxiety** (MinistryInsite, Nov. 2025; MinistryInsite Priorities, Nov. 2025). At the same time, the top reasons people avoid church are **distrust of leaders, judgementalism, and lack of meaningful spiritual connection** (ibid.).

These findings directly shaped our theological language of *"radical welcome, story-based spirituality, and trauma-informed grace."* Our project group concluded that the Recovery Ministry's focus on storytelling, hospitality, and shared meals respond precisely to these cultural pain points, reintroducing the gospel through relationship rather than dogma.

Committee Process and Project Development

Over a four-month period, the project team, composed of lay-leaders, recovery peers, and clergy, met regularly to study MissionInsite data, reflect on theological framing, and conduct listening sessions with people in recovery and those disaffected from traditional religion. We began by identifying the core problem: that many in our area struggle with emotional isolation, addiction, and spiritual injury but do not trust or feel welcome in organized religion. Using this data, the committee adopted a recovery-informed process, emphasizing lived experience and community story telling over programmatic models.

Through our meetings and discussions, we developed a 12-month launch blueprint focused on story-based worship gatherings, recovery support circles, and "Sanctuary Suppers." The planning process emphasized collaboration over hierarchy, and mirroring the peer-led model of recovery. Evaluation will occur through both qualitative feedback (personal testimonies, small group reflection) and quantitative markers (participation, partnership growth). Our conclusion was that *healing-centered ministry* requires integrating worship, recovery practices, and communal meals rather than adding a new "program" to an existing church structure.

Future Impact and Ongoing Influence

The work completed through this process is shaping the church's broader trajectory in three keyways:

1. **Missional Renewal:** The Recovery Initiative at Sanctuary on Mission's focus on vulnerability, story, and grace is renewing the parent congregation's understanding of discipleship. It reframes the church, not as a refuge from brokenness, but as a sanctuary that embraces it. This theology is increasingly resonant with the demographics and concerns revealed in MissionInsite.

2. **Intercultural Collaboration:** Addiction is nor prevalent on one culture over another. It has been our experience that recovery, and 12-Step meetings in particular, are comprised of a dicers group of people, culturally, socially, and economically. We understand this initiative to be one that connects different communities under a common vision of healing and grace.

3. **Future Activities:** The insights gained are informing plans to expand **Sanctury on Mission** into a multi-tenant hub hosting support groups, trauma-informed workshops, and creative arts ministries. Data-driven awareness of mental health and social isolation will continue to shape program development, ensuring future activities remain grounded in community realities rather than internal assumptions.

San Marcos Sanctuary on Mission: Recovery Community Ministry

Recovery Ministry Summary

Theological Mission Statement

We believe the church is called to be a sanctuary for healing and reconnection, where God's grace meets us in our deepest need. In Jesus Christ, we encounter a God who bears our wounds, breaks the power of shame, and opens the way to recovery and new life. The Holy Spirit gathers us as a recovery community – addicts, loved ones of addicts, spiritual refugees, and those who walk beside them – into a story of transformation and grace.

Guided by radical welcome, story-based spirituality, and a trauma-informed theology of grace, we proclaim that no one is beyond healing, and no one journeys alone. Here, faith is not about perfection but about process. Healing is not linear, but always possible.

Community Insights (MissionInsight, Nov. 2025, Zip Code 92069 – San Marcos, CA)

- **Population:** 49,291 (projected modest growth)
- **Ethnic Diversity:** 45% Hispanic/Latine, 37% White, 11% Asian
- **Top Life Concerns:**
  - Mental health issues (21.8%)
  - Depression (17.1%)
  - Substance abuse (7.9%)
  - Family stress & financial anxiety
- **Top Reasons People Avoid Church:**
  - Distrust of religious leaders
  - Judgmental attitudes
  - Lack of meaningful connection
- **Top Ministry Preferences:**
  - Warm, friendly encounters
  - Opportunity for personal relationships
  - Small groups, story-sharing, and support networks

Mission Alignment

The Recovery Ministry Initiative at Sanctuary on Mission integrates FUMC Escondido's mission, "live out Christ's love in our community. Our mission is to embody his teachings of love, justice, and acceptance, being sources of grace and hope. Through meaningful action, we serve and impact our community, fostering positive change and creating a more inclusive society" with local data showing deep spiritual disconnection and emotional need. Our approach creates a bridge between church and community through hospitality, storytelling, and shared healing practices.

Planning Process & Outcomes

- **4-month Collaborative Process"**
  - MissionInsite study and listening sessions
  - Core team formation of recovery leaders and spiritual seekers
  - Design of a 12-month launch plan emphasizing worship, meals, and circles of support
- **Key Learnings:**
  - Recovery is relational: story and belonging heal deeper than programs
  - Trust must be rebuilt through radical hospitality and grace-centered language

Looking Ahead

- Progressively launching **Worship Gatherings, Sanctuary Suppers, and Recovery Circles** in 2026
- Expanding to a **multi-unit Recovery Hub** hosting 12-step groups, arts ministries, and trauma-informed workshops
- Building partnerships with local recovery and mental health networks

"Together, through worship, testimony, shared meals, and mutual support, we embody God's radical hospitality so that lives may be restored, families renewed, and the world glimpses the Kin-dom of Heaven breaking in the here and now."

Report submitted by
Todd Stall
Associate Pastor
First United Methodist Church Escondido
San Marcos United Methodist Church

San Marcos Complete Theological Mission Statement

We believe the church is called to be a Sanctuary for healing and reconnection, where God's grace meets us in our deepest need. In Jesus Christ, we encounter a God who bears our wounds, breaks the power of shame, and opens the way to recovery and new life. The Holy Spirit gathers us as a recovery community – addicts, loved ones of addicts, spiritual refugees, and those who walk beside them – into a story of transformation and grace.

Guided by radical welcome, story-based spirituality, and a trauma informed theology of grace, we proclaim that no one is beyond healing and no one's journeys alone. Here, faith is not

about perfection but about process; Healing is not linear, but always possible. Together, through worship, testimony, shared meals, mutual support, and spiritual growth, we embody God's radical hospitality so that lives are restored, families renewed, and the world glimpses the Kingdom of heaven breaking in here and now.

See MissionInsite reports that resourced the research for the city of San Marcos in appendix, Figure 31, Figure 32, Figure 33, Figure 34, Figure 35, and Figure 36

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

I am extremely grateful for the participation of the three congregations in this study project. Each congregation brought a unique interest to their participation which added to the diversity of the work completed in this research project. The focus of the study was to evaluate how the current mission statement of a congregation and the knowledge of the households of their mission area would impact their thinking and approach to connecting with non-churched households. As I reflect on the work done with each congregation, I will share my learnings, conclusions and some recommendations.

For both Christ Lutheran Church and St. George's Episcopal Church, the plotting of their congregants in a mapping system provided new information. First, they were able to see where everyone lived on a map. In both cases, this visual was significant in how they defined their primary ministry area. A second learning provided by the plotting feature was understanding the Mosaic Profile of their congregant households. The system created a comparative report that identified the Mosaic households of the congregation and compared them to all households in their ministry area. This knowledge provided a better understanding of who we are (our congregants) and who our neighbors are. The Mosaic study material also provided each congregation with ministry suggestions that reflected the lifestyles of both the congregant households and the community households. This was found in the MissionImpact Guide.

The research process benefited Christ Lutheran Church in two ways. As they analyzed their information, they saw that they did not have a strong congregant presence in areas near their church. So, the first thing they wanted to do was to provide both the traditional congregation and the emerging Chinese congregation greater visibility in the community. This

was manifested as they decided to hold a “Blessing of the Animals” event in October. The second way was to provide information on the presence of the Chinese population to include in a grant proposal to fund future development of the Chinese congregation.

In March, I received this update in an email from Pastor Misael Fajardo-Perez.

> We are happy to share that we used some of the demographic findings on MissionInsite on the grant and we were approved and have begun to receive financial resources to meet this goal in our strategic plan.
>
> We are getting ready for Easter, and we will utilize the social media platforms to engage the community we decided to target during our community study for our holy week services and Easter.
>
> I think in looking at upcoming events, we need to consider the characteristics of the demographics in planning these upcoming events. Thank you again for getting us on a missional path here at Christ Lutheran Church.

For St. George's Episcopal Church, the study identified the dominant congregant Mosaic Profile and identified where these Mosaic households lived in their ministry area. With this knowledge, the study team decided to create an Advent mailer that they sent to 2,000 of these households. This knowledge was primary in focusing their efforts to communicate with non-church households with the same Mosaic Profile as the majority of their congregants. They will evaluate this effort and consider additional outreach efforts using the addresses they purchased for this effort.

In March, I received an email from Vicar The Rev. Karri Backer, PhD with the information that thirteen households clicked the QR code of the Advent mailing, but they were not able to verify if any attended a service. They will review other future uses of the mailing list they acquired for Advent mailing.

The focus at San Marcos United Methodist Church was quite different. This is a mission outpost under the ministry of First United Methodist Church of Escondido. San Marcos does not currently have a worshipping United Methodist congregation. The mission statement is focused

on new faith communities at the San Marcos campus to be called a **Sanctuary on Mission: A Recovery Community Initiative to include:**

- Progressively launching **Worship Gatherings, Sanctuary Suppers, and Recovery Circles** in 2026
- Expanding to a **multi-unit Recovery Hub** hosting 12-step groups, arts ministries, and trauma-informed workshops
- Building partnerships with local recovery and mental health networks

The integration of their mission statement and community information is the foundation for this new effort in San Marcos. The MissionInsite community data reports cited in their report were a significant resource as they shaped their ministry efforts in becoming **a Sanctuary on Mission: A Recovery Community Initiative.**

In March I received this email update from Associate Pastor Todd Stall:

> I'm overseeing 2 main projects at our San Marcos Campus.
>
> One, is in re-branding the campus as a "collective of the United Methodist Church." After we merge with FUMC Escondido, I am hoping to rename the campus "Sanctuary on Mission." I've attached a document above. It is my vision that there be a through-line of shared faith and values for the non-profit and faith groups renting the space.
>
> Currently using the space are 4 faith groups:
> **Restoration Abbey (**Anglican tradition) - Sunday morning service
> **Iglesia Evangelica Pentecostal** (Spanish speaking faith congregation) - worship services Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday afternoons and evenings.
> **Manantial de Luz** (FUMC Escondido's Spanish speaking congregation). - Saturday morning prayer meeting and breakfast
> **The Gathering** (this is the recovery-focused spiritual community I am planting) - worship services each Saturday evening
>
> We also now have 3 12-Step meetings using our space weekly.
>
> There is a Montessori School onsite using our classroom space.
>
> An exciting new project for the campus is a Community Garden, which is being planned and developed by **Restoration Abbey** and a local non-profit, **Universidad Popular**. We are supplying the space, large tool shed, and property. Costs, etc. are all being supplied by Restoration Abbey and Universidad Popular.

> The Recovery Focused ministry that I am planting is underway. As I continue to plan and develop this community/church plant, I have decided that we should start offering service each Saturday evening. We are currently 4-9 people, and meet in the prayer and meditation room at Sanctuary on Mission. Tentatively, this new expression will be called **"The Gathering."**
>
> Our mission statement is: "Our mission is to create a refuge of belonging and transformation, where all may encounter the grace of God, grow in love, and journey toward wholeness." My focused demographic is open to all. My targeted goal is about 60% recovering addicts, and those who love addicts.
>
> I continue to reach out to and network in the recovery space, to help build this. I have begun to receive some personal donations and am working on a written pitch and model for the Annual Conference.
> The name for this new church will be "**The Gathering: Where Faith and Recovery Meet"**.

I find this creative vision of ministry for an existing church location to be energizing in providing alternative ministry opportunities.

Each congregation has benefited from reviewing and analyzing their current mission statement in relationship to the contextual environment of their mission area. Faith Lutheran Church is going to recommend to their church council that they revise part of their mission statement to reflect a more focused outreach effort to non-churched households.

Given my learnings from how these three congregations have embraced this project I have come to the following conclusions that I believe can better equip a congregation to understand and communicate with non-church households.

First, the congregation needs to engage in a critical review of their current mission statement to determine whether the statement is written to reflect and serve the congregation or is focused on outreach in the community. This review once completed can be evaluated against the learnings of what is true about the congregants and how they reflect the households in the community through analytical resources available in systems like MissionInsite.

Second, there needs to be a facilitator and process in place that a congregation can follow to guide them in each step. This begins with reviewing their current missional statement and engaging with a community household information system. The facilitator needs to be fully knowledgeable with the system so the congregation research team can maximize the resources available to them as they evaluate possible engagement activities with non-churched households.

Not surprisingly, a small percentage of congregations that attempt to use community-based information utilize it in effective ways. Over the years at Percept and MissionInsite our clients reported 20-35% of their churches registered as users to access the resources of the systems. Though the MissionInsite Community Information System is designed to be user friendly, it is a data system with plotting, mapping and report functions. The system provides suggestions as part of a wealth of knowledge about each household. When we become better informed, we gain a better understanding of the realities before us if we want to be a viable and vital place of ministry.

Since each church is a unique ministry, I believe each church needs a facilitator who has the expertise to design and lead an effective process for their church. When this expertise is not available to a church, the data becomes another "interesting" piece of information but is not strategic in helping shape a viable and vital ministry in the community.

This project was successful with one facilitator with former pastoral experience and a thorough knowledge of the MissionInsite Community Information System. A question for the future is whether this process can be scaled for effective use by multiple churches supported by skilled facilitators with appropriate credentials.

The creative outreach ministries being developed at the San Marcos United Methodist Church campus are the result of a dedicated staff member who is integrating a missional statement with community need for both churched and non-churched households.

Working with each church was rewarding because I experienced each of them appreciating the new knowledge they gained both about who they were as a congregation along with a better understanding of their neighbors. For each church, there were many learnings from the data. Seeing where people lived on a map and learning about the households in their neighborhoods as well as the distance congregants lived from the church was valuable information.

Finally, each of these churches has stated that because of the insights and learnings they gained from participating in this project, they will continue to use what they have learned to provide ministry to non-churched households in their communities.

Appendix

Figure 1

QuickInsite.pdf

Figure 2

ExecutiveInsite.pdf

Figure 3

MinistryInsite.pdf

Figure 4

ReligiousInsite.pdf

Figure 5

ComparativeInsite.pdf

Figure 10

H26 Ministry Applications.docx

Figure 12

ComparativeInsite - 2025-09-04 pp.pptx

Figure 13

ExecutiveInsite - 2025- St George pp.

Figure 14

ReligiousInsite 2025 St George pp.p

Figure 15

ReligiousInsite 2025 St George pp.p

Figures 19

Primary Mosaic Households in Mini

Figure 20

ComparativeInsite - 2025-09-04 Christ Lu

Figure 21

B 10 MissionImpact Guide pp.pptx

Figure 22

H 26 MissionImpact Guide pp.pptx

Figure 23

C13 MissionImpact Guide pp.pptx

Figure 24

ComparativeInsite South of Church pp

85 Congregants
32 Households (HH)
B10 - 28 HH

Figure 25

ComparativeInsite Southeast Covina p

19 Congregants
10 Households
H26 - 7 HH

Figure 26

ComparativeInsite Southwest Covina p

14 Congregants
6 Households
H26 - 4 B10 - 2

Figure 27

ComparativeInsite
Walnut Area pp.ppt

14 Congregants
9 Households
B10 – 9 HH

Figure 28

ComparativeInsite
North of La Puente ¡

17 Congregants
8 Households
I32 - 4 HH B10 - 3 HH

Figure 29

ComparativeInsite
Via Verde Country C

12 Congregants
7 Households
C13 - 7 HH

Figure 30

Blessing of Animals
{romotion & Photos

MissionInsite reports that resourced the research for the city of San Marcos:

Figure 31

ExecutiveInsite
11.10.25 pp.pptx

Figure 32

QuickInsite 11.10.25
pp.pptx

Figure 33

ReligiousInsite
11.10.25 pp.pptx

Figure 34

ReligiousInsitePrior
ities 11.10.25 pp.ppt

Figure 35

MinistryInsite
11.10.25 pp.pptx

Figure 36

MinistryInsitePriorit
ies 11.10.25 pp.pptx

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